

*Lost* THE *Stray*  
UNFORTUNATE UNION:

OR, THE  
TEST OF VIRTUE.

A  
STORY founded on FACTS,  
AND

Calculated to promote the Cause of VIRTUE  
in Younger Minds.

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Written by a L A D Y.

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V O L. I.

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L O N D O N,

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THE  
UNFORTUNATE UNION:

OR, THE  
TEST OF VIRTUE.

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LETTER I.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Miss HARRIET  
VILLARS.

**I**NDEED, my dear, I am far from being pleased with the charms of the metropolis.—No, Harriet, never again let me be deemed a woman of fashion.—Certainly I must entertain some

VOL. I.

B

few

few ideas of pleasure distinct from those of the Circle, Ranelagh, and the Haymarket, since the gay town without my Harriet appears such a dismal *vacuum*. I was last night at Carlisle-house, where my brother, to oblige whom I went thither, introduced me to Lady Anne Clifford, who is lately arrived from Italy with her aunt Lady Harman.— This young lady values herself prodigiously upon a large fortune, which has devolved to her in consequence of the death of a brother and sister, and I believe Charles values her upon the same account. Should an alliance take place between the two families, the one fond of riches and the other of honours, I tremble for what may be the event in some future day.

You will expect possibly to hear my opinion of the entertainments of the place—Tired to death with impertinence from apes of quality, and affronted by  
 borrowed

borrowed witticisms from females who have sunk themselves below their sex, and are yet permitted with those who rank themselves with the highest of mortals. It is impossible to describe the fatigues of the evening. Surfeited with flattery from Miss Clifford, I returned distracted with the head-ach. This is deemed pleasure by some: but, alas! one hour of your company, in your Harriet's opinion, is worth an age of such trifling. Mrs. Vareny kindly called on me this morning. Her friendly society alone could have restored my complacency, absent as I was from my Lucy, and sick of *polite persecution*. This generous lady came to solicit a benefaction from my mother for a distressed widow: and you may be sure, such an example being set, her ladyship could not well withhold her benevolence — and Mrs. Vareny succeeded. Can an hundred masquerades convey so much real satis-

faction to the heart, as one such humane action?

The last packet brought us a letter from Lord Mulcester. He makes honourable mention of you: indeed George esteems you much: he always calls you sister; and it is a moot point with me, whether he loves Harriet or Lucy best; I mean, in the sisterly way: for his disappointment in his first love (which Miss Grandison calls *first nonsense*) hangs heavy on his heart, good youth! Allow for a sister's partiality, Harriet! he is almost a second Sir Charles, even as Mr. Richardson has drawn him, only approaching a little nearer to human nature.

What an unseasonable fit of the gout has Mr. Villars! 'I wish it had not happened till after the Birth-day, and then Lucy could have attended you at Rose Mount: but our good folks are so fond  
of

of parade—there is also another reason in their wise heads:—I shall in due time acquaint you with their political scheme. —Alas! alas! Harriet, I am afraid my father, to please his ambitious family, will adopt measures that must occasion the greatest uneasiness to her whom you honour with the name of friend.—Excuse my being more explicit at present; what I mention is only my own conjecture, and perhaps may not exist any where, except in the head of

Your affectionate,

LUCY TEMPLE.



## L E T T E R II.

From the Same to the Same.

**W**E are courting an alliance, Harriet—A card from Miss Clifford—"intends herself the honour of waiting on Lady Lucy"—My mother and Charles very busy in conferences on the occasion: the former bridles, the latter simpers, and the Earl whistles. A hundred and twenty thousand pounds is a sum not to be neglected in an indigent family of quality—indigent, I mean, in comparison of the magnificence that surrounds us. Charles is treated with uncommon respect, and Lucy is admonished to treat Miss Clifford with the greatest complaisance.—That might easily be complied with; but there is another scheme in reserve. The whole family,  
it

it seems, must be disposed of at once, Lord Mulcester excepted; and his wondrous merit, it is supposed, will gain him a dukedom: it is well that is allowed.— I would not wish, Harriet, to say one disrespectful word against those, for whom Heaven and Nature have ordained the highest respect. But who can help their feelings? Good Heavens! that a Peer and Peerefs of the realm should descend to mean compliances for that dirty trash which I call *the Indian revenge*.

Yes, my dear, my father has swerved from the sentiments of his forefathers for a paltry consideration, and would, if it were possible, without consulting her inclination, dispose of his daughter on the same occasion: but the independence my aunt Northington (foreseeing events) has kindly settled on me, prevents that misfortune.

I will honour and obey my parents in all things lawful, but not in one point against the dictates of my conscience. What I object against has only been hinted at a distance at present, and I wish to check their career. I speak ambiguously now, but soon I shall be more explicit. In the mean time I will conclude (to shew my learning) with some lines from Horace:

“ — The best blood by Learning is refin’d,

“ And Virtue arms the solid mind ;

“ Whilst Vice will stain the noblest race,

“ And the paternal stamp efface.”

Why do you not write, cruel girl?  
when you know that every line of your’s  
is an inestimable treasure to

Your

LUCY TEMPLE.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

Miss VILLARS to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

**I** SHALL not apologize, my dearest Lucy, for my seeming neglect: suffice it to say, that my father has been in the utmost pain for these three days past; therefore you will conclude my whole attention was fixed on him, but he is now much better.

How partial, my Lucy, are you to your Harriet!

“ Praise from those lips ’tis mine with  
“ joy to boast.”

And yet I must chide you.—What severe, what unguarded things have you said of the Earl and Countess! I know the purity of your mind, and at the same

time am well acquainted with your impetuous temper, and know it is a constitutional foible of your's. I am sure your father and mother would not sacrifice their only daughter: but your too great sensibility, my love, causes you to magnify objects. Learn, my Lucy, to guard your lips, to guard your pen: your parents superior knowledge of the world (and perhaps, in their exalted station, proper use of riches) may plead as much in their behalf, as your delicacy of sentiment on your's. Mrs. Vareny, whom you profess to admire, ought to be your pattern. Would that amiable woman, think you, let an unguarded word escape her lips or pen on conjecture only? She is indeed an example. With what a painful pleasure have I beheld her! because I have traced all my dear departed mother in every look, in every action, how often have I wished to be one of her household! What an exemplary



plary husband is Mr. Vareny! There is not a virtue in human nature, of which he is not endowed with a portion.—Such a family of love and unity, except the Royal one, I never saw.—Make my respectful compliments acceptable to them, Lucy; tell them what infinite obligation they would confer on me, were Miss Vareny granted to my earnest desire, for a month or two, in this agreeable recess. I would, as far as my poor abilities would permit, perfect her in her pencil, tambour, &c. If I have the least encouragement, I will write myself; if I gain my point, I will, with my father's permission, come to town to accompany her down hither.

My brother arrived on Tuesday night, with three companions of his own class; Mr. Melmoth is one of them: I have heard you mention him; he is a favourite with my father and Peregrine. They

all know Miss Clifford, and seem to be displeased with her partiality for Lord Charles: but, to do these gentlemen (I was going to say rakes) justice, they have behaved with great propriety at Rose Mount.

Lord Mulcester does me the highest honour; but to your kind representation of me do I owe this distinction. Tell him, when you write again, that he must take care how he praises me too much, lest I should not act up to what he wishes; for I am convinced of his well-meant compliment's being only a lesson for his adopted sister (and perhaps his real one at the same time) to improve by.—Do not frown, Lucy; but indeed, indeed, you have been very naughty.—But, to quit that subject for one more entertaining, I must tell you, I have, even in this (what a lady of the *bon ton* would call dreary) solitude, met with an adventure.

Riding

Riding out for an airing the other morning, attended only by Thomas, I let my horse take his course; when, after three hours gentle pace, he brought me to a pleasant village, where, on the verge of a common, I found a decent cottage, or rather box, adorned with an air of simple elegance. In the little court before the door all the hardy winter exotics were placed in painted vases; the window-curtains, I perceived, were crimson damask; and a guittar was hanging in one of the rooms. Struck with such an uncommon appearance in an obscure village, I wished to see and know farther: I therefore ordered Thomas to beg a glass of water for me. A very decent old woman came to the door, and desired to know "if madam would alight, and have a glass of her own distilled water." I readily complied; and, after tasting the old lady's cordial, was complimented with a sight of her house. The dressing-room  
was

was hung with India paper, and furnished with the most elegant cabinets, dressing equipage, &c. In another apartment was a forte piano, music books, new novels, plays, operas, &c. What most attracted my notice were a pair of globes and some maps, which were kept in a room sacred; for the old lady told me she did not know what to make of them: for the great gentlewoman who had taken her house, and enlarged and decorated it at her own expence, (the meaning of the old lady's language) never had those things brought out, but when her spouse, who was a great captain, was there, who could tell by them to travel either by land or sea: that madam and her maid (the only servant that attended her in the country) were gone to Stamford, but would return the next day: that her husband acted as gardener, and herself as housekeeper. I visited the garden, where I found glass beehives, orange and myrrh trees, with  
all

all that could delight the eye at this season, sheltered from the inclemency of the weather with painted canvas. I believe neither male nor female would have been otherwise than curious on such an occasion: but my curiosity could not then be gratified; for, on inquiry at the inn in the village, they could only tell they were great gentlefolk, "almost as great" as 'Squire and Madam Villars," meaning my ladyship, as I suppose. Thomas said, "he never knew the like *in his born days*," and his mistress was as much puzzled; but I conclude they are some unfortunate couple. How I long to see the fair unknown! Perhaps a female acquaintance in such a solitude might alleviate the absence of her husband. Indeed, I know not for what reason, but I seem interested in her behalf; a kind of a *presentiment* seems to attend me on the occasion: however, here it must rest for the present; but at my next airing I shall, if possible, penetrate



penetrate into the clouds that appear to envelope them.

My father begs his thanks for your kind wishes that his gout had kept away till after the Birth-day; in return, he wishes you were obliged to nurse him.

Adieu, Lucy! Believe me

Ever your's,

H. VILLARS.

LETTER

## LETTER IV.

From the Same to the Same.

**I** HAVE not succeeded, Lucy, in my attempt to find out the fair incognita. I have seen her, it is true; but it was only a transient view. The first opportunity that offered I renewed my visit to her retreat. When I arrived, I found her playing on her guittar, accompanying it with a voice so melodious, that I was for a few moments lost in admiration. But I ought first to have told you, I left Thomas and the horses at a distance, and consequently was not perceived by her at my entrance. My good old hostess received me very cordially, but told me "she believed madam would be displeased to see a stranger." Contrary, however, to my usual timidity, the lady's maid

coming

coming down stairs, I sent my respects to her mistress, and begged (if my request were not too improper) to be admitted to speak with her. She immediately came down, and conducted me to her dressing room. I then apologized for the intrusion, and told her my motives for it. She thanked me for my kind intention in her favour, saying that she was sensible of the honour I did her; but, honourable and advantageous as my notice would be to her, she was so delicately circumstanced, that she must decline what otherwise would be the first wish of her heart. It is scarcely possible to describe the sweetness of her manner, whilst addressing me: but when she had done speaking, she turned to the window, and put her handkerchief to her eyes—fine eyes indeed she has, but a kind of a wildness in them that seems to indicate a disordered mind—perhaps that is the case, and this romantic retreat is the effect of her raised imagination.

gination. I took my leave, pleased, but not satisfied: to intrude farther would be indeed to gratify my own curiosity (which is perhaps impertinent) at the expence of another's peace. Adieu, happy village! said I; adieu, unhappy fair! (for such I doubt she is). And thus, I suppose, will end the subject of the village *belle*.

My brother and his companions are with us; and now I must tell you something to their honour. A cottage in the vicinity of Rose Mount being lately by accident reduced to ashes, a poor man, his wife, and four children were totally deprived of their substance. My Jenny, whose heart is ever open to the cries of the distressed, told me of their calamity. I mentioned it at the breakfast table. My father said he would give the steward orders to build a cottage on the waste for them. Mr. Melmoth, to my great surprise,

prize, turned to me, and said, " But,  
 " madam, something ought to be done  
 " for them in the present exigency: Will  
 " you favour us with your company?  
 " because I will answer for the other  
 " gentlemen; and we will inquire into  
 " their situation." I complied without  
 hesitation, you may be sure; and the  
 gentlemen left marks of their bounty;  
 but Mr. Melmoth went farther, and,  
 unknown to me, commissioned a neigh-  
 bouring farmer to purchase a cow and  
 some pigs for them, with some farming  
 utensils, &c. Very considerate, you will  
 say, this was; and when I made him a  
 just compliment on the occasion, he said,  
 " Why, Madam, the world has made  
 " very free with my character; but is  
 " that any reason I should not have some  
 " good qualities? and when I see so  
 " bright an example (bowing to me) I  
 " must be abandoned indeed, if I did  
 " not in some measure endeavour to imi-  
 " tate



"tate it." To do them all justice, I must needs repeat that they have behaved with tolerable decency here; and yet I wish them gone; for, with their best manners, they are not the company pleasing to your

HARRIET VILLARS.

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## LETTER V.

Lady Lucy to Miss VILLARS.

I MUST tell you, Harriet, I do not like your *belle de village* so well as you do. What sort of eyes she may have, I cannot say; but I am sure they cannot be discerning ones, or she would not have declined an acquaintance with one that must have been in any situation so infinitely pleasing. Little did she know the  
honour

honour that awaited her.—Nor do I think there is any good going forward where there is so much mystery; although I must acknowledge she has baulked me of a tale that I imagined would have equalled any heroine in romance: a princess in disguise (at least) I thought her.—But peace be with her and her secret: she has less discernment than Melmoth has; he is awakened by the merits of my Harriet, and, for the honour of human nature, seems in some degree to endeavour to copy them.

Well did Mat. Prior say,

“ Examples move, when precepts fail.”

You are a wonderful girl, Harriet. Orpheus made the brutes and trees move; but you have the power to add weight to feathers, and stop their whirligig motion in your presence. Yet, with all your good qualities, you are for once blame-  
able:

able: you have found fault with Lucy in the wrong place; for when I inform you an offer was made to me of Lord B. for a husband, strongly enforced by my mother, and seconded by my father, will you not own I have reason to complain? Could you have thought it? I have suspected it for some time, which occasioned the hints I before gave you: and yet I could scarcely believe my ears, when her ladyship informed me Lord B. had asked leave of my father to address me, and that consent was given; and his lordship was to be introduced in form the following afternoon. Let me die, if I would not sooner marry one of the Cyclops, if such a being existed. When I expressed my detestation and astonishment at such conduct, "Nay, Lucy, (said my mother) only hear him; his lordship has seen and repented of his former errors; and besides, he is in great favour with the higher powers."

Ah!

Ah! there, Harriet, there lies the temptation.

“ But catch, ye fools, the glitt’ring  
“ bait.”

Lucy Temple scorns to barter liberty for  
pomp and shew.

And now I will tell you, Harriet, how  
I received him. His scandalous lordship  
came to dinner, which I did not expect,  
otherwise I would have been indisposed :  
but I was unprepared ; however, I put  
the best face that I could upon the mat-  
ter (as, according to the warrior’s phrase,  
they had stolen a march on me) ; and,  
as it was, his right-honourableship had  
but little comfort of my company : for  
all I could sing or say was in praise of  
Mr. Hill, who, in imitation of his late  
master, chuses to exalt himself to the  
hill-top, as a burning and a shining light ;  
a subject,

a subject, you may be sure, *exactly calculated* to his lordship's taste: he stared as if he had been at Otaheite, and sneered like the beaux described by the great satirist:

" In vain: — her hearer had no share

" In all she said — except to stare.

" His judgment was, upon the whole,

" This lady is the dullest soul —

" She may be handsome, young, and rich,

" But none will burn her for a witch."

Am I not excellent at quotations, Harriet? What would you have done in such a case? Why, perhaps, you would have fate down and cried, whimpered, and said, " Pray, Sir! indeed I cannot comply." Ha! ha! I cannot help laughing to think how his expecting lordship looked. — All algebra to him, girl! I laugh, and yet I am vexed: but I warrant he never ambles here again on such an errand.



As soon as the cloth was removed, I withdrew, under pretence to attend Miss D. to the Lock chapel. When I returned, all mouths were opened on me at once, except my father's. "Lucy!" exclaimed my mother; "Lucy!" said uncle John; "Sister Lucy!" said Charles; "What must Lord B. think of you? he will report you for an enthusiast."—— "Better so than a libertine, Charles; I can defend my principles and conduct; better err on the right side."—— "Sister, I shall disclaim you if you go on in such a preposterous conduct."—— "You! you! disclaim me! go and settle the pattern of your tambour waistcoat, and leave to your wiser sister all theological disputes." Charles sneaked off like his colleague Lord B. So I got quit of all the trumpery at once, and retired (after due reverence to my mother and uncle) to my dressing-room, to acquaint Lord Mulcester with this *laudable transaction*.

*action.* After all, Harriet, I am not satisfied with myself; I have shewn too little resentment. — The veriest libertine in Britain to be offered to your Lucy! My heart recoils at the thought. Suppose I had been attracted by this agreeable rake, as too many females have been, and, like to many females, concealed it from my parents, and (as the country girls say) for pure downright love had corresponded with him, and no honour or advantage had been expected from it but his own fine person, (for handsome he really is;) when it came to my friends ears, what a fine uproar would there have been! “ Who could have thought (says one) “ that Lucy Temple could have done “ so?” — “ That a woman of sentiment “ and delicacy (says another) should be “ capable of loving an immoral man!” But now the act and deed is all their own, it is all right. But is not this a bad example, Harriet? How can it be sup-

posed their precepts can be minded on other occasions? Is it not enough to raise doubts in young minds, whether religion and morality be not a jest, a tale to frighten children, like the story of Jack the giant-killer? — Heighho! I have a great mind to elope, and flutter down to Rose Mount; for I am exceedingly displeased with every one in this town-mansion. However, by way of consolation, I am to return Miss Clifford's visit this evening, and have a second edition of her nonsense: to refuse that, would give no weight to the grand refusal; it would look as if I meant not to oblige on any occasion. Charles is gone to attend her fantastical ladyship to an auction this morning. All the fashionable follies must be her's; or she would not think herself a woman of distinction. *A propos!* Lady L. who you must have heard is but lately advanced from a mean rank to a title and great fortune, gave a  
thousand

thousand pounds for some old pictures, which she dignifies by the name of antiques, but which in reality are not worth a thousand farthings: but this too is *taste*, and has been the jest of every card-table in the polite circle for these three days, and will be so till some new folly of the day arises to divert their attention. Heaven help us! what an age we live in!

Adieu, Harriet! I am

Yours,

L. TEMPLE.

Remember, Harriet, I expect your approbation of my conduct. Consider, it is the cause of our sex, nay, not only of our sex, but also of Virtue: for, as the proverb says, "who can touch pitch, and not be defiled?" Is there not a line to be drawn between virtue and vice? If a

line is drawn, let it be religiously observed; otherwise there will be an end of all distinction.

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## LETTER VI.

JOHN MELMOTH, Esq; to Sir JAMES  
HAZZELDINE.

Rose Mount.

**H**ERE I am, Sir James, with Peregrine and two or three more such honest fellows. My business, you will suppose, is shooting; indeed it is not; I have nobler game in view. But first let me premise, Peregrine Villars has a sister (as I suppose you have heard) ycleped Harriet——Now this same Harriet is deemed a nonpareil both in person and in mind, and certainly she is so: as to  
the



the former, I care not a rush for it, except for a novelty; as to the latter, she is pious, modest, a great œconomist, fond of home, and, in short, has every accomplishment one could wish for in a wife or sister. Now the fates have decreed that I must marry, or else our paternal estate must descend to the B.'s, than which I had rather go to the gallies;—(an apt simile, you will say, when I am speaking of marriage.)—Now Lord Eastmain has chosen this fair lady for his future niece, and that is my errand here; although I have not mentioned one word of it either to Mr. Villars, Peregrine, or any one: for I must observe a little, and be very wary in my conduct; for she seems mistress of a great deal of penetration, and I would not subject myself to a refusal from the little minx. Fortune with her I do not expect; for I believe old Villars's affairs are a little embarrassed: but he has interest enough to pro-

cure me an Irish peerage; and I believe, what with family connections and the girl's good qualities, this is as tolerable a match as I ought to expect. You know *my name is up*; therefore some ceremony is required in addressing such a piece of purity as this. What must I do? Why, faith, I must take up a few virtues on trust, display them with *éclat*, introduce them *à propos*, and my business is done. Do you approve of this sober scheme, or not? Remember the Eastmain estate depends on it.——But what is to be done with Isabella? Haughty and violent as she is, and notwithstanding her elopement, I know, when any pecuniary matter is wanting, she will be with me again, and then the first seduction will come rattling in my ears. I am sensible that Charles Temple is fond of her, and she perchance of him. I wish I could catch her tripping, or find out her retreat; I could then have a good pretext for breaking  
with

with her, which otherwise I shall be puzzled to bring about; for the manner in which she would tell her story to the unsuspecting Harriet would spoil the design at once. Help me out, Sir James, or I am lost; for I know twenty thousand at least shall I command, if this alliance takes place; for Lord Eastmain will grudge no expence on the occasion, so much is he wrapped up in Harriet Villars. All these premisses considered; you will own, is a sufficient excuse for the conduct of

JOHN MELMOTH.

## LETTER VII.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Miss VILLARS.

**I** WRITE again, my dear Harriet, without waiting for your answer, to acquaint you that Lord Mulcester is expected in England next month, and so improved that he will appear a perfect blazing star. Guard your insensible heart (insensible, I mean, as to love) lest Cupid, prince of gods and men, should do your business for you : but Lady Mulcester you shall be ; therefore

“ Repair your smiles, awaken ev’ry grace,  
 “ And call forth all the wonders of your  
 “ face.”

Forgive this levity, Harriet ; I am reduced to the necessity of either crying or laughing, and therefore I think the latter  
 most

most eligible. You know I dreaded my visit to Miss Clifford: Sure never poor lass suffered such an evening as I have done! Most elegantly was I dressed;— (when am I otherwise? you will say)— Charles was, in the true sense of the word, *as fine as a Lord*. Miss Clifford had scraped all her relations together from the fourth generation to welcome her intended spouse and sister-in-law; and they were so be-dressed, and so be-dizened, and did so stare at my brilliant ladyship, who flaunted away in jonquil and silver, and a most elegant suit of Brussels point, just arrived from Lord Mulcaster, that I was, to be sure, rather a figure to be envied: (No vanity at all in me, Harriet!) Two or three old grimalkins of quality next made their appearance; and the card-tables were just set, when Lord B. was announced. He came in with an air so *déagé*, and yet so little of a fop, and paid his compliments with such a manly grace,



grace, that, in spite of my aversion to his moral character, I could not see him with that detestation which every honest girl ought to have for a libertine. He soon singled me out; hoped I was entertained at the Lock; he intended to have a seat there himself, as he found it was the taste. (Only think, Harriet, the *taste* to go to church!) It puts me in mind of Dean Swift's advising the Duke of Whar-ton to *take the frolic* of being good. And so we are to change our mode in *worship* as we do our *caps*; and this in the reign of a pious Prince and his amiable consort, who endeavour to set the best example.

When this discourse was ended, Lord B. with a delicacy I did not think him capable of, made me an offer of his fine person: I refused him; but with more good-nature than I think he deserved, all things considered. He had the assurance to tell me, he should not yet despair, if by his  
future

future conduct he could gain my esteem. (A modest hope, you will say.) He looked with very significant eyes at Charles and Miss Clifford: fine advocates he will have in them. An excellent creature is this same Anne Clifford. I will give you an instance of her humanity: Lord B. was invited by Charles to a morning party; he excused himself by saying (and I believe with truth) he was engaged to attend at the Levée in behalf of an unfortunate youth who lay under sentence of death, whose aged mother had been his petitioner. "Could I, says he, refuse?"

—"Pshaw! hang the man, said Miss Clifford; it will ease the mother of a torment, and he will only die a little while before in the common course of things it would happen."—My look of indignation would have petrified a woman of sensibility. Lord B. bit his lip; and Charles blushed disapprobation. Such a glaring instance of the depravity of

of human nature could not escape any one: but, after a few moments, the cards and fishes went to work as before. His Lordship took his leave to pursue the good work before-mentioned.

From the account I have now given, you will perceive the Devil is not so black as he is painted. But although I have done this justice to one philanthropic virtue in the man, yet your Lucy's heart will remain untouched by such exterior qualities. However, when I retired, I could not help thinking of the sweet Mrs. G——'s Ode to Oberon. As I believe you never saw it, I will transcribe it.

### An ODE to OBERON.

#### I.

OFT I've implor'd the Gods in vain,  
And pray'd till I am weary:  
For once I'll try my wish to gain  
Of OBERON the Fairy.

#### II. Sweet

## II.

Sweet airy being! wanton spright!  
 That lurk'ft in woods unseen,  
 And oft by Cynthia's silver light  
 Tripp'ft gaily o'er the green;

## III.

If e'er thy pitying heart was mov'd,  
 As ancient stories tell;  
 And for th'Athenian maid who lov'd  
 Thou fought'ft a wondrous spell;

## IV.

Oh! deign once more t'exert thy pow'r;  
 Haply some herb or tree,  
 Sov'reign as juice from herb or flow'r,  
 Conceals a balm for me.

## V.

I ask no kind return of love,  
 No tempting charm to please:  
 Far from this heart such gifts remove,  
 That sighs for peace and ease.

## VI. Nor

VI.

Nor peace nor ease the heart can know,  
Which, like the needle true,  
Turns at the touch of joy or woe,  
But, turning, trembles too.

VII.

Far as distress the soul can wound,  
'Tis pain in each degree;  
'Tis *bliss* but to a *certain bound*,  
*Beyond is agony!*

VIII.

Take then this treach'rous sense of mine,  
Which dooms me still to smart;  
Which pleasure can to pain refine,  
To pain new pangs impart.

IX.

Oh! haste to shed the sacred balm;  
My shatter'd nerves new string;  
And for my guest, serenely calm,  
The Nymph INDIFFERENCE bring.

X. At



X.

At her approach, see HOPE, see FEAR,  
See EXPECTATION fly,  
With DISAPPOINTMENT in the rear,  
That blasts the promis'd joy.

XI.

The tear which pity taught to flow,  
My eyes shall then disown;  
The heart that throbs at *others woe*,  
Shall then scarce feel *its own*.

XII.

The wounds, which *now* each moment  
For ever *then* shall close; [bleed,  
And tranquil days shall still succeed  
To nights of calm repose.

XIII.

O Fairy Elf, but grant me this,  
This one kind comfort send;  
And so may never-fading bliss  
Thy flow'ry paths attend.

XIV. So

XIV.

So may the glow-worm's glimm'ring light  
Thy tiny footsteps lead  
To some new region of delight,  
Untrod by mortal tread!

XV.

And be the acorn goblet fill'd  
With heav'n's ambrosial dew,  
From sweetest, freshest flow'rs distill'd,  
That shed fresh sweets for you!

XVI.

And what of life remains for me,  
I'll pass in sober ease;  
Half pleas'd, contented will I be,  
Content but half to please.

Pray let me quickly have your opinion  
of the above, and my last; for my ideas  
are strangely confused; and when they  
will be settled, Heaven only knows.

Adieu, Harriet!

Your's,

L. TEMPLE.

## LETTER VIII.

Sir JAMES HAZZELDINE to JOHN  
MELMOTH, Esq.

I APPROVE of your scheme, Jack, in all its branches. I have heard of Harriet Villars; and by all accounts she is a nonpareil. As to a wife; why, it is a mere *nominal* affair in these days. A man has no more to do with a *wife* than he has with a *conveyance*: the lawyers are the principals; you have only to sign and seal, and receive the money. Your honour will be safe with such a girl as Miss Villars; and that is all you need to care for. You may pursue your schemes of pleasure as usual; leave your meek, dutiful consort to mind her bantams and bee-hives; and when you are tired of variety, except the name of wife makes her charms pall, you may enjoy a month agreeably

agreeably enough at Eastmain or Rose Mount with the pious idiot, who will think it her duty to receive you with complacence, and to make all things as comfortable as possible.

I have seen Lord Eastmain: he chuckled with joy to think you approved his scheme; for I read your letter to him, if it may be called reading it to reverse every line, and make you a mere moral fellow, and desperately in love with the fair Harriet. I thought his gouty lordship would have danced with his crutches.

“ Now this is as it should be, (cried he):  
 “ what he said to me I did not mind;  
 “ but he certainly has wrote his sentiments to you, who are his friend.”—

Yes, old Square-toes, thought I, he certainly has, but not fit for your eye, till Eastmain estate is settled.

As to your beautiful bunter Isabella, I can by no means find out her retreat;

but

but patience and perseverance will do all things. I hope she is abroad, and will stay there till you are shackled; and then she may come if she pleases: for girls bred in Miss Villars's manner will think it their duty to nurse both your mistress and her bastards, if she should chance to have any. And this is the comfort of those (nonsensical) virtuous women, as they choose to call themselves. — Your person, and your specious manner, when you please, may perhaps attract the girl, if that spirited little devil Lucy Temple (who must have heard of so many of your frolics) does not caution her against you. You know the friendship that subsists between them, and to what romantic lengths girls carry their friendships, especially if opposed; and that old Villars may do, if Lucy should tamper with Harriet; therefore secure Lady Lucy, and all is safe. Lord B. is addressing this delicate tergagant; if he succeeds in  
his



his suit, then surely you may in your's. Charles Temple is already married (in the news-papers) to Miss Clifford: but I fancy the match is really in great forwardness. Thus will a hundred and twenty thousand pounds be thrown away upon his paper skull. But fools have fortune. Why could I not have thought of this, or why could you not have put me in mind of it? An egregious blunder, Jack, have we made between us; for certainly I am (I think I may without vanity say so) a much cleverer fellow than he is. Be quick in your movements; for that *abridgement of the Practice of Piety*, Lord Mulcester, is expected every hour, and he may do you much mischief with both the girls. Remember, if you succeed, I expect you take up the mortgage of Hazzeldine Hall without condition, and leave it clear for

Your's,

J. HAZZELDINE.

I have just heard of Lord Belmont's being appointed ambassador to ———; if so, the face of affairs will be changed.

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## LETTER IX.

Miss VILLARS to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

**S**END you my opinion, my dear? Alas! I know not what to say.— What can such a young creature as I am say on such an occasion? My sentiments can only be those of nature, and books; all theory. You know the manner in which my aunt Bechamp educated me. Her early disappointment from Lord G. gave her a strong dislike to nobility; which antipathy increased with years and solitude. My mother, as you have heard, was her darling. Harriet was so happy as  
to

to succeed to that place in her affections. The good old lady was frequently pointing out to me the rocks and shoals, whereon unexperienced young women are almost continually wrecked. — The Court I was taught to shun as an infected place; and mankind in general was set up as a beacon to me. I must acknowledge my aunt was too narrow-minded in some things. The falsehood of a man she had tenderly loved, had soured her temper, and contracted her ideas; yet some of her maxims were well-grounded. My aunt's knowledge of the world was indisputable. I remember once she said to me, on suspicion that I cast a favourable eye on an officer of horse quartered near her villa, (and indeed it was but suspicion, for on my honour I never yet beheld man with a preference) “ I blame you  
 “ not at present, (said she) Harriet; and  
 “ only propose to give you some advice  
 “ for your future conduct. At your age  
 “ the

" the heart is susceptible of the softest  
 " impressions, and Nature perhaps did  
 " not mean that they should be con-  
 " cealed: but the treachery of *one* sex  
 " has made dissimulation necessary in the  
 " *other*; and the inclination which the  
 " men shew to take advantage of our  
 " weakness, should teach us to disguise  
 " our feelings." What think you of  
 this, Lucy? Can you dissemble? I think,  
 not; if not, I tremble for you. This  
 dangerous, but amiable libertine may at-  
 tract my Lucy more than she is at present  
 aware of. For heaven's sake, my love,  
 fly to Rose Mount: I do not fear the  
 authority of your parents so much as I  
 do your own heart. Discard the first  
 sensation of tenderness for one who can-  
 not deserve you—at least, till a year or  
 two of probation may in some degree  
 have ascertained his reformation: and yet  
 even then can a reformed rake deserve  
 my Lucy?—These are the sentiments

and doubts of the country-bred Harriet, perhaps owing to the first rudiments taught her by her aunt, who took care that she should not be thrown into the way of temptation. The fortune proposed for me my father is to enjoy during his life, after which it is to descend to me, under certain restrictions: this you already know; but the reason for it, given in her will, I believe you do not: it is, that I may not be liable to be sought after for my fortune, which, without that addition, is but very moderate, (for my brother must and will be supported like a man of fashion); and as my reversionary prospects are so uncertain, I shall not be in much danger from the beaux of this age, except I would "unsought be won." And now, my dear, you have my thoughts on the principal subject of your two last letters: I would by no means arrogate to myself the right of judging; I only speak the sentiments



sentiments of a heart that loves you beyond common description.

I admire the Ode to Oberon; the fancy is pretty: but would we in reality wish to divest ourselves of our feelings? would you, in particular, wish to deprive yourself of that heart-felt pleasure which results from the consciousness of having done a benevolent action, relieving the fatherless, and chearing the widow's heart? How have I seen your dear eyes sparkle with joy on such an occasion! Keep your sensibility, my dear; thousands will be the better for it; while your liberal mind breathes love to all who deserve it.

What an unfeeling being is Miss Clifford! a stranger to those passions that prompt the pleasing woe; nor indeed are half the women of her class much better; cards and dissipation, like Aaron's rod, swallow every other consideration — But hence reflection on such a senseless train

of animals; they taste no real joys, therefore ought to feel no real pain. — I wish Lord Mulcester were arrived; he would, I trust, advise and guide all for the best. And now I shall conclude with Oberon's answer to the fair writer:

## I.

Tell her with fruitless care I've sought;  
And thro' my realms with wonder fraught  
Tho' remedies abound,  
No grain of cold Indifference  
Was ever yet ally'd to sense  
In all my Fairy ground.

## II.

If Heav'n to minds like her's impart  
The gen'rous soul, the feeling heart,  
T'obey is mortal's duty:  
I dare not change the fix'd decree;  
Those doom'd to please, cannot be free;  
Such is the lot of beauty.

Farewell, Lucy! I am

Ever your's,

HARRIET VILLARS.

## LETTER X.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Miss VILLARS.

YOU have really frightened me, Harriet! Dear girl, what terrible phantoms have you conjured up! What have I said or done, to make you suppose your Lucy's liberty in danger? No, Harriet, I defy the whole dissembling sex. Let others venture on the rake reformed, I will not. Down to Rose Mount would I wing my flight immediately; but this gewgaw wedding detains me. You know, it would not be deemed very decent to leave town (at least some strange reason would be assigned for it) when my brother's marriage is so near. Oh! the preparations and the bustle! The gallant Lady my mother and Charles are out all day making purchases; and I

am teased to death with giving my opinion. I sometimes, for want of attention, say "Yes," when I should say "No," &c. On one of those occasions Charles took occasion to be very witty, and repeated the following lines:

" Scarce knows what diff'rence is between  
 " Rich Flanders lace and Colberteene;  
 " I'll undertake, my little Nancy  
 " In flounces has a better fancy:  
 " With all her *wit*, I would not ask  
 " Her judgment how to buy a mask."

But enough of this subject, and every other subject but that of the inclosed.— Can any other lord or lordling be worth notice, after this description of Lord Belgrave? I wish the original were come; but you, enchanting girl, shall not see him till I have *set my cap at him*. Do not call me selfish; such a black swan is worth aiming at.

Next

Next Sunday evening is the important one to Charles and Lady Anne: an evening that, I doubt, neither of them will with pleasure remember this time twelve months. — I wish I may err in my judgment.

Before I conclude, let me say a word or two concerning your aunt's disposition of her fortune. Why, odd soul! (peace be to her memory!) she has taken the only method to throw you into the power of some worthless fellow, who, struck with your exterior charms, without thinking of the value of your interior ones, will purchase you of your father, and your soft soul will be too much intimidated not to comply with the stately Mr. Villars's commands; whereas, (witness me) were you independent, they could only propose. — Remember, Harriet, caution for caution.



Adieu! Although whimsical, I am,  
and, whilst the warm blood runs in my  
veins, ever shall be,

Your's,

L. TEMPLE.

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L E T T E R   X I.

Lord MULCESTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

[Inclosed in the preceding.]

V———, December 14, 17—.

My dear Lucy,

**Y**OUR brother, the friend of your  
heart, (a name more sacred than  
that included in the fraternal tie) congrat-  
ulates you on your rejection of Lord B.  
He

He knew Lucy would not be caught by outward form: never once was he deceived in his sister.—What can I, what must I say of my honoured parents on this occasion? Custom alone can be pleaded in their behalf: they depend on the merits of their daughter, and think it is in her power to reclaim, and bring back to the path of morality, one over whom they may presume she might have so much influence. So think the fond parents—But a depraved mind cannot feel, cannot taste, half Lucy's virtues. May not my sister, in endeavouring to *purify*,—I had almost said—be *contaminated*? We live in an age that looks lightly over what I call not *small crimes*, although the *bon ton* may deem them such.—Yet I may trust your principles are too well fixed to be shaken: but vice, by being *familiarly seen*, does not shock so much as when she first shews her ugly visage. I do not mean any particular reflection on Lord B.

He is certainly blessed with good sense and good nature, and has many to keep him in countenance even in his grossest faults; but a man of such a cast cannot be a suitable husband for Lucy Temple.

It has been hinted to me, Lucy, that my dear and honoured father is proposed as ambassador to V——. Sure he will not accept such an arduous task. Why should he fatigue himself with state affairs, when there are so many younger persons, whose perfect health and strength of faculties render them more fit for such an office? Did it become me to remonstrate on the occasion, I would, with all submission, advise his Lordship to decline an honour, that I am afraid would, if accepted, in such a climate prejudice his constitution. My uncle Stanly and Charles, I doubt, have been the secret projectors of this scheme. Charles has no ideas separate from magnificence; and, in this  
age

age of elaborate luxury, all means must be taken to support the glare of shew. Pardon me, Lucy, if I write rather too severely of Charles; but I have reason to be very much displeased with him. I shall write to him shortly, as something has occurred to prevent my paying my duty to my dear father and mother, and visiting my native country, for some time yet.

In about a month from this date, a friend, whom I much esteem, proposes to be in London. You must have heard of Lord Belgrave. His father, the late Lord, without any just, or indeed plausible reason, banished his amiable son, allowing him only a trifling annuity—trifling in comparison of his rank; yet he was never heard to murmur or complain. When, about three years since, the late Earl was attacked by a malignant fever, he then saw his error, and recalled his

faultless son, who only arrived time enough to take a last farewell. The good, the pious youth, shocked with his father's death, at a time when he hoped to have been the support of his declining years, could not bear the scene; wherefore, having given proper orders to his steward, and paid his sisters (whom I suppose you may have seen) their fortunes, he returned again to the continent, where Providence threw him in my way, as a blessing that will sweeten, I hope, my future life. He is a wonder, my Lucy. Could I be so happy to call him brother! But that is beyond my hope; for, all excellent as my sister is, she is not the person adapted to Frederick's turn of mind: the mild, the timid, the gentle Miss Villars would rather be an object of his attention. However, guard your heart, Lucy: for, besides his mental accomplishments, he is handsome beyond description—then such expressive eyes! his very soul may be  
read



read in them. He has sought all opportunities of improving his mind by study, conversation, and travel. He is not only acquainted with all the sciences, but with all the professors throughout Europe. In short, he has so well mixed and digested his knowledge of men and books, that he is at this time one of the most accomplished persons of the age.—His Lordship will do me the favour to bring with him a congratulatory letter to Charles, and some presents for his bride: till which time adieu, my sister! May Heavens guard you!

G. MULCESTER.

Remember me in the most respectful terms to your beloved Harriet.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XII.

MISS ISABELLA EGERTON to Miss  
SPENCER.

WHEN will you return, Nancy?  
I shall be at a stand without you.  
I have a noble plot in my head. That  
doating fool, Charles Temple, is going  
to marry a rich heiress. On the first  
tidings I received of this, I hurried to  
town. Fanny, having her lesson ready,  
went to him in the *deplorables*; told him  
her poor love-sick mistress had been in  
fits ever since she had heard the news;  
and begged him, if he ever loved me, to  
hasten to me as soon as possible. And  
accordingly away came the tender fool  
to the *frantic* Isabella,

“ Who was wild raving, in a darken’d  
“ chamber,  
“ Of seas of milk and ships of amber.”

Oh!

Oh! how he soothed, and begged, and prayed! I threatened to leave him immediately; told him how innocent (mind that, Nancy) I might have been, had I never listened to his deluding tongue; in short, I made myself a paragon of virtue. He told me, as a younger brother he could not maintain me as he wished; that his match (and he valiantly swore to it) was a match of interest; and that I should reap the sweets of it. Afterwards, with tears, menaces, and all together, I made him take me to Carlisle House, where his sister and intended spouse were.—I saw the tall, awkward monster dangling on Charles's arm, dressed in a rich fancy dress, and his sister as a sultana: she was by far the most elegant figure in the room (myself excepted); but, thank my stars! I took an opportunity to insult her, and all the titled prudes around me.—It has been hinted to me, that Melmoth also is in search of  
a wife:

a wife: be it so—he may have half a dozen if he will; all I want of him is money. I know he has shaken off his fetters, and fears me more than he loves me. However, Melmoth may lie by for the present; all thoughts are at present taken up with Lord Belgrave. By my spies I understand he is preparing for England: I flatter myself he has not beheld me with indifference. Oh! Nancy, he is the man worth seeking after—handsome, young, and, what crowns all, has a clear estate, besides being extremely rich in ready cash; and then so elegant! so gallant! that beauty marks him for her own. I left Italy precipitately, on purpose that he might follow me. He knows not what or who I am.—Curiosity is the surest hold over a man.—If he comes to seek me, as I hope and trust he does, I will throw myself by accident in his way; and then, if I should succeed, I will let you farther into the scheme.—

I wish

I wish you was near me. Make haste and coax the ugly old fright out of a settlement; then laugh at him, and fly to me.—When Charles has got his gawky's fortune, and I have received my share of the spoil, I will retire to S——, that the country air may freshen my complexion, and I may acquire from the village maids a look of innocence; though indeed you know I can form my features to any thing. And so much for this time says

Your well-wisher,

ISABELLA EGERTON.

LETTER



## L E T T E R XIII.

MISS VILLARS to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

**A**LAS! Lucy, I complained to you once for want of a subject whereon to write; but have now one indeed! — Our visitors went away yesterday; Peregrine accompanied them part of the way. On his return he looked very important: “ Brother, (said I) you will be at a loss “ without your companions in this soli- “ tude.” “ I fancy (returned he) one “ of them will not be long absent.” — And then my father was closeted for half an hour. — At length out came the secret, that, for some reasons, it was supposed Mr. Melmoth was captivated with me. “ If so, (said my father) I would have “ you think of it; for he is a conquest “ worth securing.” (Mr. Melmoth a conquest worth securing, my dear!) I  
looked

looked with astonishment. "Nay, give  
 "yourself no unnecessary airs, Harriet,  
 "(said Peregrine) I only speak it as I  
 "wish; consider what a fortune he will  
 "have, if he marries with Lord East-  
 "main's approbation." Now do I fore-  
 see a scene of trouble for me, if my  
 brother has a foundation for what he calls  
 his hope. I know not how I shall  
 conduct myself on the occasion. What  
 business had my brother to bring his  
 companions here to disturb the peaceful  
 retreat of

Your affectionate

H. VILLARS?

Excuse my abrupt conclusion, as I am  
 summoned by my father. I beg to hear  
 from you by the return of the post. My  
 father has had another attack of the gout.  
 —Once more adieu!

LETTER

## L E T T E R XIV.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Miss VILLARS.

My dear HARRIET,

**I** CAN excuse any thing from you in such a situation; but I think your fears are groundless. Melmoth must have the impudence of Satan, if he can venture to address you: the jarring elements are not more different than your sentiments and his. Your father and brother may wish such a thing to take place, as it is the fashion to wish decent girls tied to libertines; (witness our good folks.)

But, my dear, you are in the land of liberty, and certainly, like our representatives of liberty, may cry Aye! or No!  
 — Besides, girl, Melmoth would not have

have an angel without money; not that I believe the fellow to be a miser, but he cannot go to Newmarket without that necessary ingredient; and sooner than renounce Newmarket, he would renounce all the women in Europe: and Mr. Villars will not be in haste to dispose of you if the shining dust is wanted.—So much for Mr. Melmoth.

And now let me inform you that Lord Charles and his Lady (yes, my dear, his Lady) present their most respectful compliments to you, Mr. Villars, and Mrs. Villars; and they have sent the favours (pompous ones you will see they are) which you will receive with this, and hope you will do them the honour to wear them.

*We* are so fond of *our* new title! our milliner's boxes, directed to Lady Charles Temple, are contemplated with so much pleasure!

pleasure! our cards, our messages, are all so many rapturous objects! — Then what shall we be to-morrow, when we are presented! — I am afraid the circle and the great stairs will not contain us. — Oh! vanity! vanity! how powerful is thy sway!

I told you, Harriet, I would forgive you any thing; but, on second thought, let your fears be never so great, you might have dropped one word of Lord Belgrave and George: surely the subject is worth a line. I find that George has wrote to his Lordship, and very seriously I suppose; for my mother was in a close conference with him for near an hour: — I guess the contents, although they have not as yet transpired.

I dine to-day with my new sister No doing without Lady Lucy, her taste is so elegant! — Mrs. Varenny's name is  
announced



announced below — Dear woman! I fly to meet her, my second Harriet.



She is just gone: the occasion of her kind visit was to beg I would inform you that Miss Vareny is seized with the small-pox; the whole family would otherwise have paid you a visit at Rose Mount, and left Miss Vareny with you till spring; but this unfortunate disorder has prevented what would have been so agreeable to you.

If you should have occasion to send to my brother's wife, you must direct "To the Honourable Lady Charles Temple." I thought proper to enforce this caution, as you and I are apt to be deficient in point of *étiquette*. Adieu!

L. TEMPLE.

## LETTER XV.

MISS ISABELLA EGERTON to Miss  
SPENCER.

Dear NANCY,

**G**LAD to the heart am I, that your  
settlement is in such forwardness:  
go on and prosper, girl! I have now to  
inform you, that Charles Temple is mar-  
ried, and has sent me a bank-note, value  
one thousand pounds, with a direction to  
retire to Italy, France, or wheresoever I  
please abroad, to soothe my sorrow, till  
common decency will permit him to fly  
to me. He is most woefully sorry that  
he must be denied the pleasure of seeing  
me. He hopes it will not affect my  
health, (egregious fool!) I am to have  
another note of the same value within a  
month, by the way of Holland, if I will  
send

send him my direction inclosed to the Cardigan. Now, Nancy, as I have my reasons for not appearing in town, *you* must, for a day or two. You shall have a letter ready for the occasion, the draught payable to me only. Bring it safe to me, and two hundred pieces shall be your reward.

I am here at S—— very happy, my husband (*alias* Tom Conway) with me. It is not the first time he has served me for a husband. I really have a regard for Tom: he is a fine young fellow, you will acknowledge. He must be dispatched on an errand before you come: his notions are rather too delicate to bear the honest arts which you and I are obliged to call to our aid. In the mean time, if you can find me a genteel child, about three or four years old, (no matter whether male or female) whose parents will renounce all claim to it—genteel, I mean,

in person; as to appearance, I shall take care of that—it will answer a purpose to me, which shall be disclosed when you see at S——

ISABELLA EGERTON.

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## LETTER XVI.

Miss VILLARS to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

**R**EAD the inclosed, Lucy, and tell me whether my fears are groundless.



I will suppose you have read both——  
What can I do? Which way shall I turn me? A treatment so very different from what I had reason to expect, has put me  
off

off my guard. When my honoured father had his answer ready, before he signed it he sent to me. “ My Harriet, (said he) “ my best-beloved, my dutiful girl, will “ you empower your father to send this “ answer to Lord Eastmain ? ” — “ Sir, “ Sir, (hesitated the trembling fool) it “ cannot, it cannot be; I cannot behold “ Mr. Melmoth with a preference.” — “ I do not suppose you can, Harriet; “ but time, (as he is a man of sense) “ time will increase his virtues, and lessen “ the number of his vices. I was not “ worthy of your mother, Harriet; and “ yet, by her prudence, a happier couple “ never existed in the fashionable world.” — My agitation, my natural timidity overpowered me; the letter was signed, sealed, and sent.

Dear Lady Lucy, advise me, help to extricate me from this difficulty.—What shall I do? The frightful man will be



here. Oh! for two or three grains of your spirit, so justly exerted! It must not, it cannot be. I have reasoned with myself, as much as I am capable of reasoning, and cannot comprehend what can be meant by forcing a young woman into a marriage, because it is termed honourable and advantageous, when she wants none of those honours or advantages. Am I not contented as I am? What shall I profit by the change, but losing my own name and family, perhaps to perpetuate that of a mere stranger? And, besides all this, in what light am I to be looked on but as an upper servant? having nothing *mine* (in a proper sense) more than a child has, whose father allows him to call any thing his, though without leave he cannot dispose of the smallest part. You know, Lucy, I am neither mercenary nor ambitious; yet I would wish to know, what honour or advantage (allowing what I say to be just) can

can I gain from such an alliance, or indeed any alliance at all? Marriage may be *honourable*, but to me it is not *desire-able*. Of friendship I hope I am capable; you, my Lucy, have lately taught me that noble sensation. I love society, that is, my chosen few; but am intimidated at the thoughts of the great world: I am not formed for such magnificence. Even the lonely cot and russet gown much better suit the humble ideas of your Harriet.

Love I have no notion of, nor indeed ever shall, from those who have professed it for me: they have made it the most inconsistent thing I ever heard of; they drink rivers of bliss, where there is not a stream to be seen; make mighty floods to run, where there is not moisture enough to drown a fly; they live without a heart; they fly on the wings of love, when they are not possessed of a single feather:

according to their accounts, Cupid is the emperor of the whole earth; every heart feels, and every tongue confesses, his power; music, poetry, and wit are his hand-maids; anger, revenge, and disappointment are his followers and attendants; despair and death his body-guards; in short, his votaries are the most contradictory beings in nature. From Love, and his votaries, may your Harriet be ever defended! — Good heavens! Lucy, I am out of breath — Mr. Melmoth is come in a phaeton and four — What shall I do, Lucy? Pity and pray for

Your

HARRIET VILLARS,

LETTER

## LETTER XVII.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Miss VILLARS.

WHY, Harriet, I thought you were refinement itself before; but you have now refined on yourself; and talked as learnedly on love and marriage, as Rousseau has done in his *Éloïse* of religion and morality, till we cannot tell, by his way of reasoning, what either means: and you, my dear, have distinguished away the meaning both of love and marriage, according to the common acceptation of the words; not but I agree with you in some points, and wish we might all remain in the primitive state of innocence, till the men creatures are brought to a more honourable composition. This is the present language: but whether we should not alter our sentiments, were we

to be struck by the appearance of some insinuating wretch of the lordly sex, and suffer our fancies to run away with our judgments? We should then join the multitude, and plead custom for our submission.—A witty author says, that Love and Death have their fatalities, and strike home some time or other.—You shake your wise head, and say, “ That may be “ the case with such a town-bred girl as “ Lucy;” but you are invulnerable—— So the fable says Achilles was—all but his heel. And, believe me, your little heart will not be more capable of resisting the dart of fate than the hero’s heel. You will smile at my application; but, believe me, human nature is human nature, and you, with all your perfections, must not expect to be exempt from its frailties.

Would not a *Pastor Fido* be a great addition to your lonely cot and russet gown?



gown?—ah! and if you will be honest, as much to be coveted as a star and blue ribband dancing attendance at my toilet. And so much for philosophy, at least *female* philosophy.—But, my dear, I can guess something from what you say; but you forgot to inclose any thing; therefore I must defer my serious sentiments till I hear from you again, and in the mean time will give you an account of our parade yesterday. The Earl went, the Countess went, I went, and the servants, in blue and silver and crimson velvet, the principal part of the shew. Yes, my dear, the servants, chairs and coaches make a principal part of the shew, and the gaping croud are equally as well satisfied with them, as with the jewels and tiffues that adorn the persons those equipages are dressed and painted to attend and carry: for, after all, those fine clothes and gems are only to treat the eye of the public; nor is there one in a

hundred who appear at court (would they be so honest as to own it) that would not be much mortified, if there were not what they call an assembly of mob gathered together in the great court and guard-room to admire their finery. I could name twenty who would not, in the winter season, go in their chairs to the foot of the great stairs; but rather chose to parade it from their chariots at the great gate, through the ranks of chairmen, footmen, and foot-guards, &c. especially if they had the least pretensions to beauty; and, after all, did they but know or hear the reflections cast on them by the honest souls whom they had taken so much pains to oblige, how small would be their satisfaction!

But now you shall hear how we paraded (from the great gate, you may be sure): The Countess in a rich gold stuff: next old aunt Harman flaming in scarlet and gold,

gold, like the ruins of an old castle: the Bride in a most elegant brocade, the ground silver, with sprigs of the winter-cherry; over the whole front of the petticoat was a silver net; the trimmings are sprigs of laurestinus, composed chiefly of pearls, garnets, and emeralds; in short, her whole dress was in excellent taste. (I contrived it, you know, Harriet.)— Oh! how she was looked at and envied by people whose fortunes will not permit them to shew their fancies! Your Lucy, too, had her share of gazers. My gown (a present from Charles on the occasion) is blue, with small silver stars and green leaves; the trimmings ripe hops, their leaves rising up the poles, some dropped on the ground, and others just falling. You cannot think what a pretty effect it had, and how much it was admired. We had a whole day of flaunting;— from the drawing-room to the play, from the play to Lady C——'s route. Glad

am I it is all over. Lord B. was at each place, and was much careffed by the bride. I see through the scheme; but they are much deceived, if they think to entrap Lucy.

My sweet complainant, your packet is just now brought me. What can I say? To ask advice of the Earl and Countess must not be; they will only take occasion from it to strengthen their arguments in favour of Lord B. I will wait on Mrs. Vareny this afternoon, and lay the whole before her: I dare say you will approve of my proceeding. In the mean time I remain

Ever your's,

L. TEMPLE.

As I live, Harriet, a card from Lord B.'s sister; — begs the favour of half an hour's — conference

"conference with Lady Lucy." I must receive her; but, good Lady, her errand will be in vain: for I am not to endanger myself to oblige her family. I speak seriously now, no vanity in the case, Harriet.

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## L E T T E R XVIII.

MISS VILLARS to Lady Lucy Temple.

My dearest Lucy,

**I** SEND this by a special messenger. The surprize occasioned by Mr. Melmoth's arriving in such an unexpected manner made me seal up my last without inclosing Lord Eastmain's and my father's letters. In consequence of the latter Mr. Melmoth came away post-haste, "flattered with hope," as he said. I have been



been besieged on all sides, but have hitherto kept my ground. I do not fear Mr. Melmoth or Peregrine; all I dread is my father's intreating. I told Mr. Melmoth he did me honour in the preference shewn me, but that to live single was my choice: I was bold enough to accuse him with the free life he led, and told him our principles were so different, I could wish he would seek a person whose mode of education had been more similar to his own. I suppose I mixed a little acrimony with my speech; for he bit his lip, and reddened. I wonder how long he will think fit to stay at Rose Mount. I am at present partly a prisoner, keeping in my own apartments, except I am sent to, or something material obliges me to come down.

What a selfish creature am I grown, Lucy! *Self* has entirely run away with my pen. I cannot think or write of  
 Lord

Lord Mulcester or Lord Belgrave; it will only occasion comparisons that will make my persecutor appear more disagreeable.

Say whatever you think is necessary on the occasion to Lord Charles and his Lady. We wore the favours to church last Sunday. Every branch of your family I would wish to honour; I mean, to *respect*. Heaven send the bridegroom and bride as happy as mortals can be!

Adieu, Lucy!

H. VILLARS.

LETTER

## LETTER XIX.

Lord EASTMAIN to the Honourable  
JAMES VILLARS.

[Inclosed in the preceding.]

Dear SIR,

**A**LTHO' we are but little more than personally acquainted, yet I hope, when Mr. Villars considers the subject I write on, he will excuse my beginning a correspondence, which I hope will terminate to the advantage of both parties: therefore, without farther preamble, I beg to inform you, that my nephew Melmoth entertains a strong regard for Miss Villars. She is the very woman I could wish for Jack's wife, as I have once seen the young lady, and her character rises on me from every tongue; therefore,

fore, if the young people can agree, and you approve it, no pecuniary matters shall part them.—I would have attended you in person, but my gouty disorder prevents me from enjoying that pleasure.

I am, Sir, (with respects to your son and the young lady)

Your sincere friend, and

humble servant,

EASTMAIN,

For myself, I must say the alliance proposed is as desirable as it is honourable: I shall mention it to my daughter, who I dare say, will approve it, if I find it as my desire. Something we must allow for the natural covetness of young women: but I can well picture my daughter never disgusted me in her life, which is a good prospect for me. I would wish on your Lordship's

LETTER

## LETTER XX.

Mr. VILLARS to Lord EASTMAIN.

My LORD,

I Received your Lordship's favour with great pleasure, and hope with you, Sir, that the event will terminate in the happiness of all parties.

For myself, I must say the alliance proposed is as desirable as it is honourable: I shall mention it to my daughter, who, I dare say, will approve it, if I hint it as my desire. Something we must allow for the natural coyness of young women: but I can with pleasure say, that Harriet never disoblighed me in her life; which is a good prospect for Mr. Melmoth. — I would wait on your Lordship,  
but



but for the same disagreeable reason your Lordship has given.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

Obliged humble servant,

J. VILLARS.

My son presents his respects.

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LETTER XXI.

Mr. MELMOTH to Sir JAMES  
HAZZELDINE.

**M**Y credentials were sent by the old Peer. Old Villars forwarded the answer immediately; and I, on the strength of it, set out for Rose Mount with

with a five hundred pound note in my pocket to sweeten the fatigues of the journey. I really have a kind of *penchant* for this lovely frost-piece; she is certainly very charming. You never saw her, I think, Hazzeldine; therefore I will describe her to you. She is of the higher middle size; has a most delicate complexion, blue eyes, and fine brown hair, dressed in some degree conformable to the fashion, though some of the ringlets are suffered to wanton at pleasure: then she has the most beautiful hand and arm you ever saw, and so much dignity in her air and manner, that I cannot help admiring her; and yet, when she speaks, especially if it be to an inferior, it is with so much affability, and she smiles so bewitchingly sweet, she puts me in mind of the old Scotch ballad of Rosline castle.

[bring  
Oh! come, sweet nymph, and with thee  
Those beauties, blooming as the Spring;  
With

With sweetest smiles thyself adorn,  
And add new graces to the morn!

Do not think, by this description, Hazzeldine, that I am in love.—No!—May that romantic passion be ever far from the breast of Jack Melmoth! The sex was created to answer a temporary purpose. I wish Harriet Villars mine for many reasons: her person will be new, and a delicate person she has; in the next place, if I should choose to canvas for the county, what an helpmate shall I have! The affability and sweetness before mentioned will be all in all: besides, married to such a wife, I shall have so many opportunities that a single man cannot. So that, on the whole, it is resolved Harriet Villars shall be Mrs. Melmoth.

At present the lady is in her *altitudes*: she treated me as a being inferior to herself; my morals were found fault with,  
and

and my company; even you were called in question. — Take care, my sweet Harriet; the less you say now, the less will you have to answer for when you are in my power, which you certainly will be in a few weeks.

Find out Isabella for me, I charge you, and secure her, if you value

J. MELMOTH.

## LETTER XXII.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Miss VILLARS.

My dear HARRIET,

**I** AM in the utmost perplexity, both on your account and on my own. I have laid your case before Mrs. Varenny: she  
sincerely

sincerely pities you, and thinks you will have a hard struggle between duty and nature; she smiles at your description of love, and says you are a pattern for all giddy girls to profit by; she would have you consult your own heart again and again; and she repeated the following lines from the sweet Dr. Watts:

- " Nor let the cruel fetters bind
- " The gentle to the savage mind;
- " For Love abhors the fight:
- " Loose the fierce tyger from the deer;
- " For native rage and native fear
- " Rise and forbid delight."

But the sum total of her discourse was, that she would advise both parties, but influence neither.—I told you Lady S— had sent to beg a conference with me: it was, as I supposed, in behalf of her brother. What compliments did she make me! In the name of the whole family

was



was I intreated to accept Lord B. What promises of reformation! But I will keep my integrity. I really like her Ladyship, and could wish to be allied to her; but it must not be: I cannot, I will not venture; although I own, Harriet, Lord B. is not quite so indifferent to me as I could wish. Therefore you, my dear, are better off than I am: you fear nothing but your parent, and have not the least inclination in Melmoth's favour; and I have my own heart, and "all the pomps and vanities" of this wicked world, to contend with.—I would fain be saucy, but I cannot.—But, dear Harriet, do not let a breath of this escape; I should blush to death, were it even to be surmised. Depend that I will conquer or die.

No, Harriet! Melmoth cannot be the man for you: however, let me be informed of all.——

I am



I am asked for below: who can it be?  
 —Desired to go down immediately—A  
 gentleman with Charles—Handsome Bel-  
 grave, I'll lay my life—I'm coming—  
 What would the folks have?

Adieu!

L. TEMPLE.



Lady Lucy — *In Continuation.*

CAN you guess, Harriet, to whom I  
 was summoned? — To Melmoth, in-  
 troduced by Charles. He came to solicit  
 my favour; hoped I would believe his re-  
 formation sincere; and vowed and begged  
 in the same cant, which the men wretches  
 have used time out of mind. I told him

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I would

I would certainly represent what he had said; but you must be left to the dictates of your own heart; that prudence and penetration never quitted your company: but I thought it wrong in him to solicit you, except he thought you gave him some preference. He seemed to think patience and perseverance would gain his point. (The men have no vanity! Harriet, none at all!) Then the family connections were expatiated on, the settlements, &c. The offers are noble, to be sure; but all the gold of Peru will not purchase my Harriet content of mind. Charles shook his empty head, as much as to say, "Who could refuse?" He is a married man, you know; and he looks to consequences, as either he or his lady may have children. You would laugh at the sagacious airs he gives himself, and to hear him talk of family expences, as if he had been married two years, instead of as many weeks. Poor fellow! I fancy  
his

his family expences will increase, for he has a most precious helpmate: she lost considerably at Arlington-street last night. But no matter—they are much alike — “ashes to ashes, and dirt to dirt”—their’s is a match of interest, you know. I hinted as much to Charles, and said, Miss Villars had better wait a little, to see how their halcyon days went on. “Charming Lady Lucy!” said Mr. Melmoth. Charles whistled; but was not very well pleased—I did not intend he should. What business had he to interfere between me and my friend, his advice not being asked?—And now, Harriet, I have told you the subject of this embassy, which amounts to just nothing, only to shew how much Melmoth is in earnest in his pursuit of you, and his promises of reformation.

Yet I am afraid all opposition will be in vain: you will, I doubt, be sacrificed

to this man, as I know your family; there will be no resisting such baits as Lord Eastmain has thrown out. Oh! my dear, my beloved friend, are such charming qualities, such exalted merits, to be sunk in such a marriage? — Adieu our tranquil days! — I will, if possible, obtain leave to come for one week to Rose Mount, and then we can convey our sentiments more fully to each other: besides, my sweet girl, I want your advice; a few lessons from my dear mistress will soothe my mind, which is at present in great distress. Now, my dear, we are both called upon to shew that our professions and practice agree; we have both trials, although in a different way. Charles mentioned the purport of Mr. Melmoth's visit to my father and mother; and a fine lecture I had on the occasion. If it had not been from such revered lips, I might have given them an answer that would have made them look about them:

as



as it was, I sat down to my harpsichord, and there charmed away my vexation with some of Jackson's sweet compositions; — a method I always take when I dare not vent myself in words; which points out how much harmony is wanted among us. Inclosed you will have some music which was composed on the banks of the Volga; a proof that love, even in sight of such a boisterous element, can soften rocks, and tame savages. I will send you the words, when I can get them properly translated; which I am afraid I shall not soon have an opportunity of doing; but of that more fully when you see

Your

L. TEMPLE.

## LETTER XXIII.

Miss VILLARS to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

**H**ASTEN, hasten, my dearest Lucy, your proposed condescension to your Harriet. Oh! how I wish for the balm of friendship to confirm my doubting mind! — doubting, can I call it? when my fate is almost at a crisis: but of this in its proper course. I had but just dispatched my last to you, when Mr. Melmoth begged an audience of leave: he regretted, in the most pathetic terms, my indifference to him, (how my heart leaped for joy! concluding from hence that he was going to take a final leave) but would still hope, if he could by his future conduct in the least deserve such purity; — and then whipped into his phaeton, and drove off. The moment he was gone

Peregrine

Peregrine opened his sage mouth: "One  
 " would think you were bewitched, Har-  
 " riet, (said he) to refuse such an offer:  
 " you have done a fine piece of work!  
 " What the devil possessed you? (was his  
 " polite phrase) you will never have the  
 " chance of obtaining such another prize."  
 — " I do not wish it, brother." — My  
 father then interfered: " It is not your  
 " place, Peregrine, to speak to your  
 " sister: Harriet is a very good girl;  
 " I do not blame her for setting a proper  
 " value on herself: men are not over-  
 " fond of an easy purchase. Melmoth  
 " will be here soon again, I dare say."  
 (What art, my dear, in this man!) And  
 here the subject ended for that time. But  
 on Thursday, as I was preparing to take  
 a ride to the village where dwells the fair  
 recluse, (no harm in riding through the  
 village) the horses were ready in the court-  
 yard, when Jenny came running up out  
 of breath — " Madam! Madam! (cried

“ she) I believe here is Lady Lucy come ;  
 “ there is a chariot and six, with six foot-  
 “ men, coming up the avenue.” I shot  
 like lightning down stairs ; but how great  
 was my disappointment to see a strange  
 livery, and, instead of Lucy, an elderly  
 gentleman in the chariot ! I hastened into  
 the little drawing-room, my mind pre-  
 saging it was Lord Eastmain—It was his  
 Lordship.—When my father presented  
 me to him, the old agreeable Peer saluted  
 me with rapture ; said, he hoped he em-  
 braced his future niece ; adding, that he  
 had taken that long journey quite from  
 Berkshire in hopes to carry me back with  
 him—he would be guarantee for his ne-  
 phew’s behaviour. I was extremely plain  
 with him on the score of Mr. Melmoth’s  
 morals, and asked his Lordship, if he,  
 in Mr. Melmoth’s case, could be content  
 with a wife who had not the least shadow  
 of a preference for him. He owned that  
 he should much rather have found the  
 regard

regard mutual; but, even as it was, he did not doubt but his nephew's behaviour would create gratitude, and gratitude was akin to love; and he would answer for it, in less than two years we should be deemed the happiest couple existing. I curtsied and retired, my heart full. After dinner his Lordship begged to attend me in my dressing-room: but I knowing with what difficulty his Lordship moved from his gouty disorder, waited on him below; and he then told me what great things would be done; that I should have a jointure on Eastmain, or the reversion of my own fortune settled on me, without condition. I told him, it would indeed be buying a wife: I could not tell what to say to the good old nobleman, because I revere him; and yet the objection on my side is as powerful as ever.—My father came to my apartments early this morning, and told me that his Lordship had again offered to make the above noble



settlement, and did not ask one shilling portion: moreover, he would lend my father money to prevent a mortgage on the Bedfordshire estate from being foreclosed. He intreated; told me it would prolong his life, if I would consent to be Mrs. Melmoth: for his affairs were so embarrassed, he must otherwise retire to the South of France, and become an exile from his native country. I expostulated as long as I could; offered to sell my title to the reversion of the fortune which my aunt had left; but all to no purpose. He said that would not do; and kneeled to me, Lucy, with his recently recovered lameness. Too much mortified by the sight, I begged him to give me a few days to recollect myself, and said I would endeavour to oblige him.—A severe trial is this, Lucy! You know how highly I think of duty to parents: and yet, to vow love and obedience to a man whom I do not love, and

much

much less should obey, if his requests should be unlawful—What can I, what must I do?—Providence alone must be the guide: human wisdom is too poor.—Yet once more I beg you will hasten to me: the generous confidence you have placed in me shall never be abused. How I pity you! But I was afraid you would be entangled with the too agreeable Lord B. But your magnanimity and independence will do for *you*, what I am afraid cannot be done for the poor

HARRIET VILLARS.

## L E T T E R XXIV.

From the Same to the Same.

**A**LAS! Alas! my Lucy, why did you delay? — Do not start — The fatal promise has passed your Harriet's lips. Mr. Melmoth came here last night. I was set upon by them all, kneeling, at once; whilst the poor, distressed, motherless girl in vain looked round for a female friend to support her in such an affecting situation. — Why, my Lucy! why this silence at a time of such consequence to your friend's future life? — I am too much disturbed to write coherently — yet I must tell you, this half-given extorted consent has put them all in real or affected raptures. The settlements are preparing as fast as possible. Lord Eastmain seems to have forgot his gout. Mr. Melmoth

is

is the only one who behaves with moderation: but his joy, he says, is too great to be expressed in words, and his unworthiness allays his happiness. As yet he keeps a respectful distance: indeed I cannot find fault with his behaviour; and besides, I must now endeavour to see all in the best light, and hope his future conduct will enable me to look forward divested of that terror which so lately struck me at his name.

Peregrine will be the bearer of this: he comes on some business for Lord Eastmain. I suppose, neither his Lordship nor his nephew will stir, lest I should waver; when, alas! they know not that poor Harriet is sacrificed for her father's welfare. A very good return, you will say, for their generosity. But we are much on an equality: I barter my peace to satisfy their fancy.——How I wander from the intention of this! which was to  
tell

tell you that my father requests you will take the trouble of giving orders for my mother's jewels to be new set, which my brother will deliver to you, and of choosing some rich silk for two dressed sacques, no matter what: I leave all to you. Give Spillsbury orders about the trimming and every thing: there needs no great hurry. I shall provide myself with some things at Lincoln, and the rest will be bought when I come to town to be made a shew of. Be with me as soon as possible.

Your affectionate,

but half-distracted,

H. VILLARS.

LETTER



## LETTER XXV.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Miss VILLARS.

YOU may well accuse me, my dearest creature. Your Lucy, the friend of your heart, ought to have been with you. Why was I hindered by any consideration? I could almost tear my hair for vexation. I really believe, had I been present — But why do I say so? It was determined on. Lord Eastmain must have had strong assurances, or he would not have taken such a journey, and bespoke in his way through town a set of jewels as elegant as ever I saw. Peregrine would drag the jeweller (G—— on Ludgate-hill) to shew them to me: the taste in which they are set, is indeed excellent. But enough of those trifles; and, to have done with the subject of dress at once, I have obeyed  
your

your orders, and flatter myself you will be pleased with my purchases.

To return to the grand subject: —  
 I must again repeat, this matter was determined. There has been a great deal of art used throughout the whole proceeding. Had your father commanded and threatened, I really believe you would have raised up a spirit, and refused: but the right method was taken to conquer your generous temper. From the moment Mr. Villars wrote to Lord Eastmain, I saw you were doomed a sacrifice to avarice and ambition. But you must make the best of it now. I like the old Peer, and cannot blame Melmoth for wishing such a treasure his: Who would not? But somebody I must be angry with; and who so much deserves it as your father? for once more I repeat, is such exalted merit to be sunk in such a marriage? Were you a mere modern lady, it  
 might

might do—separate apartments, and a life of dissipation. But the gentle Harriet, formed for domestic tenderness and tranquillity, will never be able to manage Melmoth. Were I the person, I could hold him with a curb bridle (a disagreeable office!) but you, who would govern with a silken rein, and thereby break the thread of your office, would almost break your heart in consequence. But Heaven avert those evils! I hope that Providence you depend on will prepare a reward for your virtue.

And now, my dear girl, let me account to you for the reason of your not seeing or hearing from me. In the first place, that phoenix of the age, Lord Belgrave, arrived just as I was preparing to set out for Rose Mount. Common decency obliged me to stop for a day on his account: he is indeed an angel of a man; but my heart is secure—heigh-ho! too secure from

from him. We had a great deal of conversation about George. Lord Belgrave seems wrapped up in him. Most magnificent presents has he sent to his new sister. What a power has George, with the fortune his grandfather left him, to shew his princely spirit! — The next day I thought my own: but, behold! tidings were brought from the fountain of news, that my father was appointed ambassador to V——. I was not so much surprized, as I was vexed; for I had expected it, as you may suppose. A grand entertainment, according to the news-paper phrase, was given to the foreign ministers on the occasion, at his Lordship's house in G—— square: to be sure his fair daughter must not be absent. No feast without Lucy.— The next day Lady Charles and her family chose to cram themselves: there were aunts upon aunts, and cousins by dozens.— This fatigue was just over, when Lord Belgrave—a compensation  
 for

for all! — sent to invite himself to breakfast, to take leave previous to his journey to Bath, whither he is gone to attend a sick sister. — All these things surmounted, the chariot at the door, the maid ready, the trunk and all packed up, when Peregrine came. I have obtained leave to set out to-morrow, and stay a week with my Harriet.

So adieu, till we meet on Saturday!

Your own

LUCY TEMPLE.

LETTER



## LETTER XXVI.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Mrs. VARENY.

Rose Mount.

Dear MADAM,

ALL your commands I shall with pleasure obey. I arrived here on Saturday evening, and found the lovely, the languid Harriet at cards with Lord Eastmain, &c. But how inattentive! how absent! how unlike the Harriet we have seen! Her countenance brightened up at my approach; it was observed by Melmoth: I gave him one of my looks, and brought him to order in a minute; when Harriet and I retired to our chamber; for we slept together. We said every thing that could be said on the occasion: but it all ended in this woeful truth, that,  
after

after what had passed, her fate was inevitable; and, as such, I begged of her to put on a more chearful countenance, lest the lordly husband, in his day, should remember her reluctance. She promised me she would observe my advice; and endeavoured; but it was not in her power. At length the dreaded Monday came; joy in every countenance but Harriet's and her Lucy's: yet I did all I could to be chearful myself, and to make her so. But I have the advantage of most folks: what I want in natural good-humour, I make up in pertness; for I am never fullen: and it is all one to me, whether the company laugh at me, or with me.— The lovely girl was dressed in a pale blue watered tabby robe gown and coat, Mechlin lace linen, her cap ornamented with pearls, one row of pearl round her neck, and bracelets of the same upon her delicate arms: and in this manner, like a lily overcharged with dew, was she led by

by Lord Eastmain to the great parlour, and there by a special licence joined to Mr. Melmoth. I, who had leisure to observe every one, cannot help thinking that he seemed rather to behave with an air of proud exultation than of tender joy. Mr. Villars and Peregrine are really joyful—for a joyful cause to them: but Lord Eastmain—I really revere the good old man—scarcely knows how to shew his love and esteem for his new niece.—The jewels are come, and presented: poor Harriet received them with that sweetness which accompanies all her actions. She placed them on her toilet, and with a deep sigh said, “ Oh! Lucy, “ what have I given up for such baubles!” I endeavoured to laugh her out of her deplorables; for I would not for the world her husband should suspect her strong indifference to him. “ Be “ chearful, Harriet, (said I) for I am “ under the necessity of making myself “ a fool,

“ a fool, that you may appear wise.” — Her duty, of which she thinks so highly, and her natural good temper, will make her a more exemplary wife, than hundreds who marry with their own consent. But it ought to be a very lively soul to keep Melmoth’s affections awake; one that would make him look about him: for his intentions, I suppose, are, like those of all the free livers, to govern by fear instead of love. — But hence reflections! No more complaints now: let me turn the bright side of the prospect. The whole family will remain at Rose Mount till after the Birth-day: Mrs. Melmoth is then to come to town *incog.* to take leave of my ladyship, as our family are to set out for V—— in March or April; then they are to retire to Eastmain, there to reside till just before the breaking up of parliament, when Mrs. Melmoth is to be presented, as it is presumed she will by that time be reconciled to her situation,

and

and that her countenance will resume its wonted serenity, if Melmoth does not before that time break her heart. I say and unsay all in a breath: in effect, I cannot persuade myself to any degree of liking or esteem for this man; though I can give no very particular reasons for entertaining any greater aversion for him, than for numbers of what are called the *fashionable* young men of the age; and it must be allowed that he has shewn, if indeed it be sincere, a disposition to reform: yet, after all, I must conclude that he is not the man calculated to make her happy, except she can model him by her own excellencies; a hard task in this degenerate age!

The mourning bride presents her respectful compliments to you and Mr. Varenny; in which she is heartily joined by

Your obliged friend and servant,

LUCY TEMPLE.



## LETTER XXVII.

Lord BELGRAVE to Lord MULCESTER.

Bath, January 3d.

**I** KNOW, my dear George will rejoice to hear from me; will rejoice to hear I arrived in perfect health in my native country. I was received with the utmost cordiality by Lord and Lady Belmount. How justly do they esteem their invaluable son! Your sister treated me with that unaffected ease, freedom, and politeness, for which she is so much remarked. Lady Lucy is certainly a most charming woman: her wit is truly brilliant, yet tempered with so much sweetness, as probes at once and pleases the heart: at the same time she is an excellent example to all young women of quality; being one of those happy geniuses, who seem

born for whatever they do, and are continually employed without appearing to be so. She dwells with pleasure on her brother's praises; I need not tell Lord Mulcester *which* brother, Charles and his Lady differing so widely from either of of you——But it does not become me to reflect on those to whom you are so nearly allied; nor indeed do they act otherwise than most people of their age and rank do in this general dissipation.——But to return to Lady Lucy: I understand she refused Lord B. on account of his morals; and greatly is she commended by the few “who have not defiled their garments:” as to the common herd, their approbation or censure in such cases is of little consequence. I breakfasted with her yesterday: I went in order to take my leave, being summoned to this place by the illness of my sister Caroline, who I fear will not recover. As both my sisters are here, I design to remain with them some weeks.

Lady

Lady Lucy was to set out for Lincolnshire the next day, to attend the nuptials of a lady whom I have heard you mention in very respectful terms; Miss Villars, if I mistake not.

You may remember, George, when we were at Florence, we took notice of an English lady, who frequently went to the British consul's, and always returned with an air of dejection: you may likewise remember the offers of service we both made her; when she modestly answered, that her griefs were of such a nature as not to admit of any relief we could give her. This very lady, dressed in widow's weeds, I saw in the abbey church: she had with her a lovely girl, about four years of age. I spoke to her; but she declined conversation with me. There appears something so uncommon in her manner, that my curiosity was raised to know what and who she is; but my endeavours

deavours were vain: for she quitted Bath the next day; and no one can tell from whence she came, or whither she is gone. You may perhaps smile, and think some latent motive occasions this curiosity: indeed it is only compassion. Love is as yet a stranger to my breast; and, I trust, you will not suspect me of engaging in an illicit amour.

On Wednesday your honoured father was to set out for V——: he says there is no danger that the climate will prejudice his health. How prevalent is ambition! It is the many-headed hydra: if we lop it off in one place, it will sprout in another. My sisters (although one of them is in a manner dying) are not insensible to its effects. How often, how earnestly have they pressed me to pay my addresses to Lady H. B.! a very worthy young lady, I make no doubt; and they would persuade me she looks on me with a preference.

a preference. I have not that vanity: nor would I marry the first woman on earth, except I could prefer her to all women on earth. I love the amiable part of the sex, and, from the highest to the lowest, would I render them any services my interest or fortune would permit: but as yet I have never seen one whom I could wish to possess the heart, and bear the name, of

Your

BELGRAVE.

P. S. I said Lord Belmount was to set out on his embassy on Wednesday: it was my mistake; Wednesday was the day of his appointment.



## L E T T E R XXVIII.

Mrs. MELMOTH to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

Eastmain, April.

**A**DIEU, thou sister of my youth!  
 Ally'd by friendship, honour, truth!  
 Adieu, my dear! since Lucy flies  
 To distant lands, and other skies.

And are we, my Lucy, to part for three long years? What will become of your Harriet, now the sister of her heart is torn from her? Mr. Melmoth is not so much awake to the finer feelings of friendship: he laughs (as does Peregrine) at female friendships, and says, they are formed by fancy, and broken by caprice. Very polite this to me, who am their only female companion, setting the relationship out of the question! Good Lord East-

main

main justifies us poor women, and maintains we are as capable of friendship as the men; mentions your regard for me with honour; and gave us an instance of two females in the lower class of life, one of whom, although a very honest, industrious person, yet by unavoidable misfortunes was doomed to the horrors of a prison; her friend voluntarily shared her fate with her, and worked in the prison to maintain her, for near two years; when a charitable gentleman, whose life is one entire good work, happened to hear this uncommon instance of faithfulness, took methods to have them relieved, and raised a subscription (to which his Lordship contributed very liberally) to put them in a way of getting a comfortable subsistence. This may serve to shew that human nature is not so depraved as we thought; and there may be more Lady Lucies and more Mrs. Varenies in the world than we know of. — But how I

wander from the subject nearest my heart! Most ardently do I wish, you a prosperous journey. May good angels guard you, and render every æra of your life happy! But oh! my Lucy, I have a strange foreboding that we shall never meet again. My heart is uncommonly heavy; nor can I, by all the efforts in my power, remove the gloom which has spread its influence over me ever since I left G—— square: yet do not you, my Lucy, I charge you by all the love you bear me, sadden your prospects for my (perhaps foolish) apprehensions.—We propose being in town next month, and then you may expect a large packet. Let me desire you, my dear girl, to omit no opportunity of writing to me; for you well know what a balm your letters will be to

Your ever affectionate

HARRIET MELMOTH.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIX.

Mr. MELMOTH to Sir JAMES  
HAZZELDINE.

Pall-Mall, May 7th.

**H**OW rejoiced is your friend Jack,  
that he can date from this place! —  
Wife, uncle, and all come. — Now, thank  
heaven, I am my own man again! —  
They have had me in the trammels long  
enough. — All is settled and done: I can  
get no more cash for some months — And  
now away for Newmarket, where I hope  
you will meet me. But I must first pay  
my devoirs to the higher powers, and  
shew this handsome spouse of mine. All  
the four quarters of the globe are ran-  
sacked to dress her by my old uncle,  
(take notice she does not care three far-  
things about it) in order to augment her  
G 5 charms.

charms.—No need of that: Nature has been very bountiful to her—were she a little more animated: but then she is a perfect statue, like Pygmalion's miss. I dare say, were she to be dissected, her heart would be found marble. I cannot, however, find fault with her conduct: she never contradicts me, but is perfectly submissive. A mere Jacobite passive obedience and non-resistance seem to be her principles: nevertheless, I must say, we are “joined, not *matched*.” She is infinitely too good for me; I have no comfort with her—such is her sublimity!

“So stars, beyond a certain height,

“Give mortals neither heat nor light.”

But enough of wife and domestic matters.—I was last night at Lady Charles Temple's rout: there was, according to the common phrase, a numerous and brilliant assembly. She really grows a prodigious



prodigious fine woman. She is vain of her person, and consequently fond of flattery; two ingredients as desirable as a man could wish for, who has any designs. I intend Mrs. Melmoth shall be very intimate with her: not that she suits Harriet's turn of mind—my philosophic rib says the lady has too much levity for her; but, if I give the word of command, it must be complied with; nor, to do her justice, will she dispute it; although I do not expect they will make any friendly connexion. It is enough for me if Harriet countenances her.

Now, in the name of wonder, what is become of that devil incarnate, Isabella? She is certainly forming some plot; or she would not remain so quiet. You have not surely been in earnest in your search after her. Ashford insists that he saw her in a post-chaise near St. Alban's last week. Be it as it may, I wish I could.

fix Charles Temple with her; for (*entre nous*) I believe he cares very little for his lady, and she just as little for him. A fine prospect for me, Sir James!—Philips will be with you about the mortgage as soon as this can reach you. Observe that I mind *your* interest; therefore pray mind mine. I need say no more, as you know what is required by

Your's,

J. MELMOTH.

LETTER

## LETTER XXX.

Lord BELGRAVE to Lord MULCESTER.

St. James's square.

**I** CAME hither late last night, after accompanying my sisters as far as Dover, in their way to Montpellier.— Since I wrote last, I have met with two adventures rather of the romantic kind. In my way from Bath, I thought I would cross the country, and pay a visit to my old friend Admiral A——. I left the coach, and mounted my horse, attended only by Abraham. I struck out of the great road, and upon the confines of a small wood the shrieks of a female voice awakened my attention. I dismounted, and followed the sound of the voice till I came near a thicket, where were two ladies in a single-horse chaise: the horse had

had taken fright, and entangled himself in the reins; was plunging in such a desperate manner, that their lives were in the most imminent danger. I cut the traces with the assistance of Abraham, who by that time had fastened the horses, and was come up. The youngest of the ladies (one of the most beautiful women I ever saw) fainted away in my arms, as I was endeavouring to help her out of the chaise: the other, who appeared to be a woman of rank, and not of so delicate a texture as the fair one I supported in my arms, told me, that, as they went to take an airing, she (as she frequently did) had undertaken to drive the chaise; but their servant had loitered somewhere behind. Never in all my travels did I see so sweet a creature as my charge; the true feminine softness appeared in every feature, in every action: but whether she is maid, wife, or widow, I cannot say: the former, I presume; for the lady was scarcely

scarcely recovered, when the servant came up, and released Abraham from the task of holding the horse. He was ordered home to bring a chariot with all possible speed to farmer Wells's on the common, whither the ladies permitted me to accompany them: indeed I was obliged to support the younger, or she would have been unable to reach the destined place. The farmer's wife received them with the utmost respect; and I perceived she knew them. She begged me to take some refreshment: but, being to meet the coach with my sisters at Reading, and finding no farther aid from me necessary, I took my leave, lest I should be deemed impertinent. (The ladies had retired before I went.) Abraham waited at a distance with the horses; and so I could gain no intelligence concerning them. But I cannot put the idea of the amiable creature, whom Providence directed me to preserve, out of my head: if she is a person of consequence,



consequence, I shall see her again; if not, time will efface the impression her person has made: and yet I dare say her mind is worthy of that person; for it seemed to illuminate every feature.—And thus ended the first adventure.

And, as if this were to be a week of such adventures, the morning after I came to town, as I had fauntered into the grove in the Green Park with Thomson's Seasons in my hand, being tired, I sat down; and had scarcely been seated, before the fair widow and her child made their appearance. I rose to meet her; so that she could not avoid me without great rudeness. I begged her to be seated, and, after a proper introduction, told her I was convinced she laboured under some uneasiness of mind. I acquainted her with my name. She answered, "I know who you are, Sir; Lord Belgrave's character for humanity and goodness is well

" well known throughout Europe: but  
 " I, Sir, am not worthy of your notice;  
 " and yet my case is particularly un-  
 " happy."——She then briefly told me,  
 that she was the widow of an officer,  
 who, having been very extravagant, had  
 sold his commission, and left her and  
 her infant in great distress; that, having  
 married against her family's consent, they  
 would not countenance her; but a lady  
 of great consequence, on her husband's  
 side, had offered, and was really under-  
 taking to get her a place in some depart-  
 ment at court. I promised her my in-  
 terest. She was pleased to say, the notice  
 of a person of such an exalted station,  
 who was yet more esteemed for his virtues  
 than his descent, would be of infinite  
 service to the future welfare of her child,  
 for whose sake she had roused herself from  
 a lethargy of grief, and was willing to lay  
 herself under obligations to the humane  
 and good; otherwise the name of obli-  
 gation

gation had been unknown to her. She said she had gone through many and heavy afflictions; but her child being of a sex so liable to temptation, she wished she could provide for her in some recluse place: she, however, expressed her dislike of a convent, and gave strong hints that her adherence to the protestant religion had partly reduced her to her present situation. From some other words that dropped, I have reason to think she is descended from some noble family in Italy, and brought to England an infant: She gave me her address, and excused herself from farther conversation at that time; only observing, the fineness of the morning had prompted her to give the child air and exercise; and as the meeting was so accidental, she hoped it was providential: — and then walked off with her sweet innocent. I could not with delicacy offer her any thing then; but I will inclose a hundred pound note to be sent to

her

her retreat in the country, and propose to see her in a short time. She is certainly a most beautiful woman; yet she falls far short of the delicate, amiable creature before-mentioned.

I wish, my dear George, you could be prevailed on to hasten your return to England: much do I want your friendly counsel. I am but a young man to be entrusted with the guidance of my own passions in this age of corruption, where such numbers are bewildered in the labyrinths of error. In you, my friend, I trust to find, as hitherto I ever have found, a steady mind, superior to the general trials of life. No wonder, then, that I should wish to engage you as a pilot to point out to me those Scyllas and Charybdises, which threaten the destruction of my frail bark on this uncertain voyage through life's wild, dangerous ocean.

I have

I have been warmly solicited to accept  
 a post of honour; but I have refused.  
 I love my Sovereign, and, if I were  
 capable, would serve him: but, as I said  
 before, I am a very young man; and it is  
 always slippery standing about the throne.  
 — A courier was dispatched yesterday to  
 Lord Belmount; but the contents have  
 not yet transpired.

And now, my dear Lord Mulcaster,  
 what can I add, but that I am

Yours,

F. BELGRAVE

LETTER



## LETTER XXXI.

Lord B—— to Lady S——N.

My dearest SISTER,

I AM compelled by a secret impulse to write to you. — You, my dear Bab, know what virtue is; and I am now convinced it is more than a *name*, or the divine Lady Lucy would not have fled from a man, whom I am sure she does not hate, only for his faulty morals. — What a wretch must I appear in her eyes, who could forsake her native country, when she had the offer to stay with her brother and sister, to go to a land utterly unfit for her delicacy, and, merely lest she should listen to me, should endanger her own virtue! — Do not call me vain, when I say I am not quite indifferent to her —

What

What then must be her resolution?— I said, do not call it vanity; it is not vanity, it is the greatest humiliation to me.—What shall I do? Instruct me, dear Bab, teach me the paths I desire to trace.—How despicable do I appear in my own eyes! How has this dear creature awakened the spirit of manly emulation in me!—Will you, my dear Bab, get acquainted with the incomparable Mrs. Melmoth, and introduce me? She is my Lucy's bosom friend: by copying her virtues I might make myself an interest with her, and thereby also with the mistress of my fate. I am sincere in this application, or I would not apply to you. I could be introduced to Mrs. Melmoth by her husband or her brother: but let me tell you, I should not think their introduction a recommendation to either of the ladies. Do not, my sister, be too harsh with a young convert; by degrees I hope I shall be

be all you wish me, and thereby much more worthy to sign myself

Your affectionate brother,

B—

## LETTER XXXII.

Lord BELGRAVE to Lord MULCESTER.

**P**REPARE, my dear George, to hear strange things. You remember the amiable creature I assisted in the wood in Berkshire. This agreeable woman is—— but let me tell the story regularly—— I went to the drawing-room last Thursday, and there, sparkling as an angel, I saw the incomparable woman, and soon after heard her announced as Mrs. Melmoth. Good heavens! how was I struck to

to think that Providence had directed my steps to save Lady Lucy's friend! I shall ever esteem it as the whitest hour of my life. Every eye was fixed on Mrs. Melmoth, who was indeed most graciously received by our matchless Queen, and received with becoming dignity the honours conferred on her. The behaviour of so sweet a bride must do honour to the sacred institution. When their Majesties were withdrawn, she whispered Lord Eastmain, who immediately turned towards me, followed by her. With ineffable sweetness she said, "This is the gentleman, Sir, "to whom I am so much obliged." Then addressing herself to me, "My "fright and illness, Sir, (said she) at "that time prevented my making the "proper acknowledgments, or informing "you of our place of residence. Lady "C— F—, who was my companion, "came down to give you our address, "but you were gone." His Lordship then

then desired me to favour them with my company as soon as convenient. We were then joined by your brother and Mr. Melmoth: the former introduced me to them. As soon as the name of Belgrave was mentioned, a fine glow overspread Mrs. Melmoth's face. She said something to Charles in a low voice: what it was I did not hear; but he smiled. That evening I waited on them, with your brother and sister. Our chief conversation turned on you and Lady Lucy. How fond are these two amiable women of each other! They seem indeed to have kindred souls. Your sister-in-law did not seem very fond of hearing Lady Lucy's praises—no wonder. Lord B. was there, brought by Mr. Melmoth: he seemed to court my acquaintance; but I could not behave so cordially to him as I could wish to have done, as he is of the class I would generally choose, if possible, to shun.



Your brother and Mr. Melmoth are going to Newmarket; and I am deputed to escort their Ladies to Eastmain, as Lady Charles is going on a visit to Mrs. Melmoth.

I hope this will be the last letter I shall have occasion to send to the continent, and hope you are now on your way to V.

Adieu, George! I am

Ever your's,

BELGRAVE.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXXIII.

Mrs. MELMOTH to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

Eastmain.

**B**Y this time my Lucy will have read the contents of my packet, acquainting her who is my party to this place. We are much happier than I supposed we could have been. Lady Charles is sometimes *en desespoir*, when she thinks of the town; but the agreeable Lord Belgrave soon restores her good-humour. We walk, we read, we ride out: at some times we go fishing; at others we join in a little concert: so our time is far from being disagreeably spent, and my uncle is quite delighted: only, as I said before, your sister sometimes yawns, especially when we are reading, and wishes October was come; and then Lord Belgrave laughs

and raillies her with such a grace, that she is obliged to laugh with him. Indeed his Lordship is master of such persuasive eloquence as always to please, be the subject gay or serious. Never did I see so much wit and so much solidity so happily blended. No wonder your brother should esteem such a man. Would they were brothers! Oh! that such a treasure would fall to my Lucy's share! — But to descend, as it were, almost from heaven to earth: Lord B. was twice at our house in town, and at both times besought my interest with you, if I should think his future conduct deserved it; assured me that he was in earnest in his reformation, and hoped every day would make him more worthy of my company. I wish him reformed for his own sake; for he is really very sensible, and possesses a fine person. — Lord Belgrave is gone across the country to pay a visit to some lady; he is not to return till next week. We

are

are preparing to go to Reading assembly.  
My uncle calls, and the coach is waiting.  
I will conclude this when I return.—



I have not had time till just now to proceed: Lady C—— F—— was at the assembly with Lady S——, Lord B.'s sister: she introduced me to her; and yesterday both the Ladies came to dine with me. Lady S—— is a very discrete and amiable woman: she read me some part of a letter which her brother had written to her; if he is sincere, (and it certainly has an air of contrition) he will deserve respect, as he so early sees his error, and leaves his vices before they have left him. The Ladies staid the evening. Our family were preparing for bed, when the bell rung at the outer gate; and presently Lord Belgrave made his appearance. He appeared much fa-

tigued, and apologized for coming at that *late*, or rather *early* hour, (for it was near three in the morning.) At breakfast he still appeared very languid, and very thoughtful: the moment breakfast was over, he retired, saying that he had letters to write which would take up all his attention, but that he would dedicate the whole afternoon to us. My uncle is under great uneasiness on his account; for he esteems him as much as he does Mr. Melmoth. I suppose it is some concern of the lady he has been to visit—(a love-quarrel, I dare say;)—and yet she must have a very unfeeling heart to quarrel with Lord Belgrave: for

“ In him each meek, each modest virtue

“ dwells,

“ Sedate as night, and cool as vernal

“ gales.”

I cannot help being interested in behalf of Lord Mulcester's friend—But I will  
dispatch



dispatch this, and another shall follow it soon; till when, and for ever, believe me to remain

Your affectionate

H. MELMOTH.

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## LETTER XXXIV.

MISS EGERTON to MISS SPENCER.

A Thousand plagues light on that beautiful witch, Melmoth's wife! This is the second time she has robbed me of a prize. Melmoth defies my power. — Belgrave has been here; and certainly would have been taken in my toils, but for her. Oh! how I hate her! I tried every art of “wilful woman labouring for her purpose” to shake his firmness,

ness, but in vain. Like Rinaldo in the enchanted forest, he conquered, — carried all before him, — and left me, although it was four in the afternoon; and took post-horses from the next town. I had my emissaries ready, and soon learned the route he had taken was to Lord Eastmain's, where he had been for some time before. It is not the gouty old man can engage him; nor Charles Temple's wife that can have any charms for him: it is Harriet Melmoth — How came she to know him? I suppose they talk over their nonsense of virtue and morality; but, soft souls! I may mar their entertainment. I will never leave till I make Melmoth jealous, or hate his wife. I had till yesterday some faint idea of hope; but the post brought me a letter which has entirely silenced that flatterer. In this fine scrawl Belgrave tells me he can never see me more, incloses me a draught for another hundred pounds on his banker,

and

and takes leave; earnestly wishing me happiness. Nothing but a miracle can throw him into my power now. Remember, Revenge is the word; make haste and revenge the disappointed

ISABELLA EGERTON.

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## LETTER XXXV.

LORD BELGRAVE to LORD MULCESTER.

**I** HAVE endured a severe conflict, my dear George, since I wrote last. I told you then how happily, how agreeably we spent our time at Eastmain——impossible to be otherwise where the amiable Mrs. Melmoth is.——She sheds a dignity over all the female race: I cannot tell whether most to admire her in

H 5

the

the *serious* or the *social* hour. In writing, reading, drawing, she is excellent : she is one of the best oeconomists that ever managed a house, and at the same time one of the most elegant women that ever graced a circle.

Do not wonder that I dwell on her praises; she deserves every grateful tribute from my hand.—But to acquaint you with the reason of what I first mentioned, let me inform you I quitted the peaceful shades of Eastmain to pay a visit to the fair widow, as I had promised. Must I say with Hamlet, “ Frailty, thy “ name is *woman*?” She received me in a chamber that was a little darkened, herself reclining on a sofa in a most pleasing *deshabillé*, and seemingly in a faint and languid condition. She spoke to me in a weak and tremulous voice, told me how much she thought herself obliged to my humanity, expatiated on  
my

my virtues, and said, with a sigh, she wished she had never seen me: in short, she behaved in such a manner, (and yet kept within the bounds of delicacy) that it was too much almost for man to bear. I am not more than mortal; I was ready to yield—ready to promise every thing—in that moment of passion, and doubtless so to fall a prey to the allurements of a Siren. When the idea of the divine Mrs. Melmoth darted into my head, how did this wanton sink in the comparison! Can I (said I to myself) look the virtuous Harriet in the face? That thought roused and impelled me from the place. She followed me with looks that plainly indicated the situation of her mind, and spoke contending passions labouring in her breast. “Am I, am I, (said she) “to sink unnoticed and unpitied? And “yet still all my care is for the cruel “Belgrave.”

H 6

I bowed,



I bowed, but remained silent; then mounted my horse, (which had not been put up) and rode, or rather flew to the next town, where I had left Abraham. I there took fresh horses, and never stopped till I reached Eastmain, which I did very much fatigued with riding so many miles in a few hours. I confirmed my conquest over passion, by conversing with the virtuous Harriet. And now will you not own the obligation I lie under to her? Had it not been for her, I had sunk into the lap of pleasure, and embittered my future life. I am rejoiced that I may now think myself much more worthy of your friendship than ever. I wrote to the lady yesterday, and excused myself from ever seeing her again; and yet I would serve her at a distance, if I could, (I mean, if I found her deserving.) I think it better for her peace of mind not to see me, and let the benefits which I might confer

confer on her be through another hand.

—And now, George, for this time  
adieu!

BELGRAVE.

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## L E T T E R   XXXVI.

Mr. MELMOTH to Sir JAMES  
HAZZELDINE.

**I** AM out of humour with all mankind,  
and women too almost, except Anne  
Temple. — You broke your leg in a good  
time to prevent your being at Newmarket.  
— Devilish bad luck, Sir James! — Old  
Villars, Peregrine, and myself are in a  
horrid scrape. Twenty thousand gone at  
once! The money to take up the mort-  
gage on the Bedfordshire estate must be  
applied

applied to this use; and more must be raised unknown to my uncle. Which way that can be done, except my pious helpmate will join to sell the reversion of the fortune left by her aunt, I know not. I will sound her on the occasion.—That second Seneca, Lord Belgrave, is here: I have a great mind to ask him;—yet those moral fools know the value of money. I believe I must set Harriet to tamper with him. He is very rich: his estate is clear, which is generally the luck of those sober blockheads. Surely he will not deny the amiable Mrs. Melmoth any thing she asks. You would burst your sides with laughing, were you to hear the compliments they pay to each other's virtues, as they call them. When I invited Belgrave, I entertained an idea that some opportunity might offer of making use of his (otherwise useless) cash.—I have all the opportunities I could wish with Madam Temple; for Charles is gone to Portsmouth:

mouth: but I fancy she is overawed by my plaguy wife's example; for those women of *principle*, as they are called, keep the good-natured, free-hearted ones in subjection.—My uncle looks cursed gloomy at something: whether he has any notions of what has happened, I cannot say. I hope Peregrine has not played me false; it can answer no end to him. Or perhaps he is angry at Lady Anne's coquetting with me; for I believe he would cut my throat for Harriet's sake, if he thought her slighted—then why did he tempt me to such an unsuitable match? —But enough of those matters. I would come to Hazzeldine Hall, were it practicable; but you know I have various ends to answer at this time. I have a great mind to take Harriet's necklace to town, and have it new set: yet it would be rather impolitic now; the jewels must be my dernier resort. Farewell, Hazzeldine! I see the beautiful Annie going  
into

into the Park; an invitation for me to follow—a temptation not to be resisted by

JOHN MELMOTH.

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L E T T E R XXXVII.

LORD MULCESTER to LORD BELGRAVE.

Padua, July 15.

My dear LORD BELGRAVE,

**I** AM grieved and pleased beyond expression at your last. I will set out as soon as possible from this place, nor stop till I reach England. Oh! my Frederick, you have indeed a Scylla and a Charybdis to fear: although you have shunned one, I am afraid you will be wrecked on the other. Even a good woman may be the means



means of making your life unhappy: the amiable Mrs. Melmoth may create you almost as much uneasiness as the frail widow; for, should you entertain a passion, although there is no danger of that passion being gratified, would you not blame yourself for coveting Mr. Melmoth's wife?

Fly from Eastmain, fly from the too lovely Harriet, as you value your peace. Love and esteem are widely different: the first is ever due to virtue and sense; the other is spontaneous, and will operate accordingly: nay farther, we often deceive ourselves in regard to this passion; and in that case it is not at all wonderful if we appear to deceive others. Therefore your only safety is in flight; and I hope to find you at Castlemont when I arrive; since I need not assure that dear, very dear is your welfare to

G. MULCESTER.

Before you do any thing more for this fine widow, pray, my Frederick, inquire who and what she is. I am not apt to be narrow-minded; but I have my doubts concerning her. I have heard some accounts of Charles which give me pain: I wish you would inquire into the truth. I will inclose you the letter. You will suppose I do not doubt the veracity of the writer, but of his informant; and slander is apt to magnify objects. However, it is the honour of our family Nelson seems to have at heart. — I heard from Lucy yesterday: she inquired in a very friendly manner after you; a favour Lucy seldom bestows on her male acquaintance. She says you are an owl amongst the birds. You know my sister's method of speaking; and her's are more than compliments.

Once more, adieu!

G. M.

L E T T E R   XXXVIII.

Lord MULCESTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

Eastmain.

My dearest SISTER,

**Y**OU will too well account for my dating from this place. As soon as I arrived, I went to Castlemont, but found not Belgrave. I then crossed to Eastmain, and there (as I expected) found him. No wonder the lovely inhabitant should attract his notice: she is indeed

“ The cunning pattern of excelling  
“ Nature.”

Why, why did she see Lord Belgrave at all, since she saw him not sooner? She is so much improved both in person and mind (and that I thought scarcely possible)  
that

that they are much too amiable to be together. I can perceive, and I am sorry, Frederick doats on her; and no wonder if she should on him. There is every temptation thrown in their way that can be, to increase a mutual regard. Not that either of them would entertain a thought that a Vestal might blush to own:

“ But Love approaches under Friend-  
“ ship’s name; ”

and they are dancing on the edge of a precipice without knowing it. Now all the powers of friendship must be exerted to draw my friend from this virtuous, amiable, and yet dangerous woman. All I trust in at present is the prudence of the lovely Harriet. She is certainly as near perfection as mortal can be; but nevertheless she is human. And that wretch Melmoth (yes, I must call him wretch) is an insensible being; he is blind to the  
good

good that courts him; he scarcely treats her with common civility. Charles's wife seems to engage his present attention; they are continually coquetting; for Charles is absent on an occasion which I am afraid will end in his eternal dishonour. Mr. Villars is at the Spa, upon another infamous account; and Peregrine is attending my hopeful brother. Mr. Melmoth is a libertine, in every sense of the word; he does not now even wish to save appearances; he almost disdains to be thought virtuous, even in the presence of his inestimable wife. Lord Eastmain is exceedingly hurt on the account, and has spoken his mind to me several times, but is loth to come to an open rupture on his beloved niece's account.

A great deal of money has been lost, I hear, at Newmarket; and some unjustifiable means must be taken by the losers to retrieve themselves. How unbounded  
are



are the cravings of luxury! The love of fame was once esteemed the universal passion; but certainly at present the love of pleasure is more universal. Happy is it for those who make the first their pursuit, if it teaches them to avoid the latter.

The good old Peer seems hastening to the verge of fate; his health declines very fast. If he should be called to reap the reward of his virtues, poor Harriet will lose a much more affectionate parent than her natural one has been to her.

I must proceed very cautiously; and yet this amiable fellow must by some artifice be taken from hence. Do, Lucy, write to your friend: she will start at being even suspected of entertaining a thought of Lord Belgrave. Do you, in your sweet, lively, yet sentimental manner, point out her danger. My next, I hope,

hope, will be from Southampton, whither I will endeavour to bring this worthy youth; for my Lucy, good as she is, is scarcely more dear to

G. MULCESTER.

I shall dispatch a packet, as desired, to-morrow; but things are in a doubtful situation among the higher powers.

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L E T T E R   X X X I X .

Mr. MELMOTH to Sir J. HAZZELDINE.

Pall-Mall.

**T**HAT fickle jade, madam Fortune, seems now inclined in my favour. Lord Eastmain, good soul! is seized with the gout. Harriet staid to wait on him: but

but Mr. Villars came from the Spa, and was seized likewise (very opportunely) so as to prevent his going to Eastmain. Harriet was sent for; and she, like a dutiful good girl as she is, came away immediately; and yesterday, sweet soul! set her fair hand to the reversion before-mentioned. We are now again *in statu quo*; and Harriet, seeing us so happy, is pleased too. What a fortunate stroke for me was it, that that sagacious animal Lord Mulcester, with his colleague Lord Belgrave (I think for the future I will call them Beaumont and Fletcher, as they always act in conjunction) happened to be absent! otherwise my conscientious spouse might have been for consulting them: but, thanks to my assisting genius! it is done. And now, my Lady Harriet, you should do just as I please, were it not for his uncleship: but patience may do for me more than I think; and, whether spouse or I should be most favoured in his

his bequests, it is all one as I shall manage; for am I not her lord and master? I forced her, out of kindness, to the masquerade last night. Harriet detests masquerades—No matter—Lady Charles was to be there; and the devil must be in those that could censure her and me, my wife being present. Harriet was only in a domino, and unmasked soon after she was in the room; poor unsuspecting queen of wisdom!——

“ But oft’, tho’ Wisdom wakes, Suspicion

“ sleeps

“ At Wisdom’s gate.”——

I left her to the care of Lord B. who was there with his sister (also unmasked); and then I withdrew with the lively Annie, leaving Will Ashford and his girl, who were dressed on purpose so as to personate us. Charles Temple was at Stapleton’s: so the coast was quite clear. And so much for the masquerade.——I hope

you will be able to travel in a few weeks, as I want to consult you, and cannot so well come to you at present. Write, however, to congratulate

Your friend,

J. MELMOTH.

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## LETTER XL.

Mrs. MELMOTH to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

Rose Mount.

**T**HIS is the first use I have made of my pen for these three weeks past. Lord Mulcester, I dare say, has informed you of my father's illness. — Oh! my Lucy, the final scene is now closed! — How painful is this separation between  
such



such near relations! How dreadful are the ravages of this King of Terrors! I am, as you may suppose, in much affliction at this irreparable loss; but I have another cause, almost beyond my recent deprivation. I am afraid I have lost the favour of my second parent; and then what will become of your poor Harriet? I have indeed acted wrong to oblige Mr. Melmoth. I ought to have consulted Mrs. Varenny or Lord Mulcaster: but could I appeal against my husband? I sold my reversion; and my dear father, I have reason to think, was privy to it. Surely, thought I, a father will not see his child wronged. But neither Mr. Melmoth or Peregrine has shewn proper respect to either the dear deceased or myself. Common decency obliged them to stay with me till the funeral were over; and now they are hurrying me to town, that they may dissipate the remains of my father's shattered for-

tune. I am forced to be thus severe; for I have acted imprudently by myself, and ungratefully to Lord Eastmain. His Lordship has wrote me a very severe letter. I know not which way to fly, or where to turn me for advice. I wish Lord Mulcester were come: and yet could I, with propriety, consult him? I know not what to do. I must go and pay my duty to Lord Eastmain, and try to soften his resentment.

Adieu, my Lucy! I am very ill, and can write no more at present, but that I am unalterably

Your's,

H. MELMOTH.

LETTER

## LETTER XLI.

Mr. MELMOTH to Sir JAMES  
HAZZELDINE.

Pall-Mall.

ONCE more, my dear Baronet, am I got to this delightful spot. My weeping Niobe had much difficulty to bear the journey. I really thought madam was going to walk off the stage; and that would have been *mal à propos* at present. The death of the old man has disclosed the affair of the reversion; and his Lordship has forbidden me his presence on the account, and written his favourite such a letter as has almost broken her heart. I wish now it had not been done; if I had thought the old man would have popped off so suddenly, it should not—But hang reflection!—I must have mo-

ney in the course of a week, come from whence it may. Lady Charles is out of cash, or she would have supplied me. I know not what method to take, except your old acquaintance Isaac will advance for me; and then his terms are so exorbitant!—But I must get you to write to him; for, as I said before, money I must have. Peregrine will join with me in any security.—Ashford, poor fellow! is terribly under water—he must be assisted—It is our method.—We must help one another, you know.—When shall we find a set of sneaking, regular puppies do so?

I know not how I shall get into his Lordship's good graces, except I can get this peerage, the scheme for which Mr. Villars set on foot;—I wish he had lived to complete it. Many comfortable things there are in a peerage. Undaunted can a Peer of England face those lions, called duns; besides that said *Scandalum Magnatum*.

*natum.* Were I to knock a paltry fellow's brains out, my title would protect me. To be sure, I should be but a Baron; but then I should be a Peer—you may perhaps say, with Lord Chesterfield, a wooden one. No, no, Hazzeldine; if I can do no good, I'll not be wanting in doing something. Majority or Minority, it is all one to Jack, if they bid high enough.—However, Harriet is to wait on his Lordship, and hint the peerage to him; on the result of her mediation shall I depend.—My worshipful brother-in-law is made a justice of the peace, and is very well qualified for the office; for he has scarcely been sober since his father died, and would mortgage Rose Mount, but that he reserves that to canvas with in the spring, as he thinks the privilege of the House will be necessary by that time.—Send to Isaac out of hand, and believe me

Your's,

J. MELMOTH.



## L E T T E R XLII.

Lord MULCASTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

**I** AM under the greatest apprehensions on your friend's account. Lord Eastmain is embarked for Lisbon, as, I told you in my last, his physicians had advised him: the tender, the grateful Harriet would have accompanied him, but he would not permit it, partly because he thought her presence might, perhaps, be some restraint on Mr. Melmoth's conduct. An old gentlewoman, in the capacity of a nurse, and his chaplain, who is a pious sensible man, are his companions. Lord Belgrave and myself, with Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth, attended him to Portsmouth. — Melmoth is the most unfeeling being I ever saw, except where his interest is concerned; then indeed he can appear all softness,

softness. His uncle is really fond of him notwithstanding his faults: he has absolutely persuaded the good old gentleman (could you believe it?) that a patent for a peerage will be obtained for him, and on the strength of it has obtained a considerable sum of his Lordship, which will only increase his power of doing mischief. Harriet does not want penetration; and yet she too is continually made the dupe of Mr. Melmoth, and of her brother. The latter, hardened man! had the assurance to ask the loan of two thousand pounds of me to pay a debt of honour, as he called it. I refused him, with some little indignation; and yet, for his sister's sake, endeavoured to reason with him: but he is lost to all sense of reasoning. Good heaven! that a man should be so infatuated, as to put on the cast of a dye the estate of which he is in possession from his ancestors! Yet who will deny, that he who hopes to win what belongs

to another, deserves to lose his own? And here, my dear Lucy, let me observe, in the words of a favourite author,—

“ There is such a sameness in the lives,  
 “ the actions, the pursuits of libertines,  
 “ and such a likeness in the accidents,  
 “ punishments, and occasions for remorse,  
 “ which attend them, that I wonder they  
 “ will not be warned by the beacons  
 “ which are lighted up by every brother  
 “ libertine whom they know; and that  
 “ they will so generally be driven on the  
 “ same rock, overspread and surrounded  
 “ as it is, in their very sight, by a thou-  
 “ sand wrecks.”——I am, as I before

observed, extremely concerned for Mrs. Melmoth: she is very ill; she visibly falls away, and her fine complexion fades; yet she takes great pains to appear lively and chearful. But this brute, the husband, will shorten her days, unless he reforms; and that, from the nature of the case, at present cannot be expected.—I do not

believe

believe he has dined at home for these ten days, and have some reason to think they have separate apartments. — Oh! the poor Harriet! how hard is her case! and what must this monster think of himself! The good Mrs. Vareny is with her at present, and I hope will administer some comfort to her, which I am sure she wants, although she is too delicately nice to complain. — Lord Belgrave is always here, but when hours of decency compel him to retire. As there is no keeping him from the house, I endeavour to be with him as much as possible. Harriet seems to avoid him as much as she can, without being particular. — Charles and his Lady are on very indifferent terms: her Ladyship, on something that Charles had said to her, flew away to her aunt Harman's; and there she has been these three days past. Charles has humbled to her even to meanness (not from love, I believe): he has great expectations from

Lady Harman's fortune. The whole polite circle sit in judgment on this modern couple. Both aunt and niece console themselves with Mr. Melmoth, who is their *Cecisbeo*, conducting them to all public places. You will perhaps say, my Lucy, that I am a retailer of scandal: but I would rather that you should hear those disagreeable truths from me than from another. As for Charles, unthinking as he is, he would not like to be honoured with a certain name in his wife's power to bestow.—I remember a character almost similar, delineated by a great genius, who puts these words into his mouth:

“ I always thought her a coquet,  
 “ But never dreamt she *wrong'd* me yet :  
 “ Altho' I do not doat upon her,  
 “ I cannot brook insulted honour ;  
 “ Nor do I think it to be born,  
 “ She should add to my crest a horn.”

I can



I can scarcely speak civilly to her, or her aunt: she is wrong to encourage her in a breach of duty, especially when she knows the world has begun to make free with her character: she depends on her great riches. Indeed, Lucy, I am displeased with all the world but Mrs. Melmoth and Lord Belgrave; and *they* are doomed to make each other unhappy. I see briars, thorns, and a pathless track before them. My mind, my dear Lucy, is faddened with apprehensions for Lord Belgrave, and for the amiable Harriet. I would fain tear myself from a subject which at present will intrude itself on me: for the purport of this long incoherent letter was to beg his Lordship would write to Lady Harman, and inform her how free licentious tongues have made with her niece's name, and what foundation her conduct has given for such freedoms. It is his duty as a parent; and I hope her Ladyship will exert herself on  
this

this occasion, as the honour of our house is so much concerned. Adieu, my sister! I need not admonish you what to say, if you write to Charles. I am just now informed that Mr. Melmoth is below, and desires to speak with

Your ever affectionate

G. MULCESTER.

## LETTER XLIII.

Mr. MELMOTH to Sir J. HAZZELDINE.

**H**ERE is the devil to pay, Hazzeldine!—Lady Charles lost three thousand with Count Alberini on Tuesday night! She did not go home till six in the morning.—Charles had ordered another bed to be made for himself: *that* gave

gave her no great concern; but the loss of such a sum gave her more chagrin than I supposed such a spirit was capable of. She sent for me at eleven: I, as in duty bound, though with great difficulty, procured and lent her the money. She then sent for Charles to breakfast; but he went out without vouchsafing to send an answer. She ordered her horse, and we took an airing in Hyde Park. When we returned, we understood Charles had sent home for some clothes, but left no word whither he was gone, or when he should return. Madam flamed out, and exclaimed, “ That she would not be  
 “ flighted—she who brought such a fortune!—She would go to her aunt’s,  
 “ and she would have a separate maintenance.” I was pleased to hear this; it is my plan to keep up her resentments.  
 “ It is really monstrous, (said I) Madam,  
 “ that you are not suffered to spend your  
 “ own money as you like. For you,  
 “ who

“ who have brought him almost a princely  
 “ fortune, to be restrained in your hours  
 “ like a slave, is a thing not to be borne.  
 “ — Liberty is a principle implanted in  
 “ the breast of every British woman:  
 “ the meanest wretch will contend for  
 “ liberty.” — (I then thought of what  
 Poll Perkins said to the constable of the  
 night, who had taken her into custody  
 for being riotous at an improper hour:  
 “ You had better let me go; for my  
 “ dear Wilkes says confinement is not  
 “ *constitutionable*.” Poll mistook the word;  
 but it had great effect on the constable,  
 for she got her discharge.) I improved  
 on this hint to her Ladyship, and con-  
 ducted her to her aunt’s: Charles, not  
 suspecting her to be there, came to com-  
 plain; and Lady Harman treated him as  
 the old Dutchess of Marlborough is said  
 to have treated the Duke of Montagu,  
 who came to complain of his wife’s con-  
 duct: “ How dare you (says she) make  
 “ such

“ such complaints to me? My daughter  
 “ was a virtuous woman when you mar-  
 “ ried her; and if you had not conduct  
 “ enough to keep her so, you have a  
 “ great deal of effrontery to tell me of  
 “ it.” Some such speech Lady Harman  
 made. An excellent tutorefs for a young  
 lady! you will fay. I could not help  
 laughing. Charles walked chafing about  
 the room—“ Mr. Melmoth, (faid he) I  
 “ did not expect this from you: What  
 “ would you fay, were Mrs. Melmoth to  
 “ act thus imprudently?”—(The very  
 thought made me whistle.)—Before I had  
 time to make him an answer, his meek  
 helpmate began—“ Mrs. Melmoth is no  
 “ comparifon—What woman of fafhion,  
 “ do you think, would compare herfelf  
 “ to fuch a piece of ftill life as Mrs.  
 “ Melmoth? If *ſhe* choofes to run about  
 “ the houfe like a tame pigeon, that is  
 “ no reason that *I* ſhould: I have better  
 “ notions of freedom, and a power to  
 “ ſupport



“ support them.”—(So much the better, thought I; *Bravo!* Lady Charles.)——  
 With these words, and a violent toss of the head, she quitted the room. Good manners made me offer to withdraw; but Lady Harman insisted on my staying. She had no secrets, she said. She talked of applying to the Earl and Countess; said they had dearly purchased an alliance with a family of quality, if her niece was to be denied the privileges allowed to all other women of rank.—(*What are those privileges, Sir James? I think they are comprised in these three articles—spending their husbands’ fortunes—dishonouring their names—and suing for separate maintenances;—and all this because they dare.*)——

Now my *Cara Sposa* is in the other extreme: she will give one no hold on her. It is easy to perceive Belgrave loves her to distraction; I wish she did him: but she is, as the elegant Mrs. Hall says  
 on

on another occasion, a perfect composition of iced cream. If she had half the *penchant* for him he has for her, they would elope; and then Castlemont should pay for all. I give them all the opportunities they could wish; but in vain. Cupid is foiled; all his arrows are blunted by Hervey's Meditations, Young's Night-Thoughts, or some such enthusiastic antidote. Besides, there is that sage Mentor, Lord Mulcester, continually at his elbow. I will sound him about advancing some money for his sister-in-law: I will point out to him the temptations to which want of ready cash may make her liable: I warrant you I will tell him a tale that will rouse his delicate imaginations, and coax something out of him. Peregrine wanted to take him in; but it would not do: he was too barefaced; and so the matter miscarried. Adieu, Hazzeldine!

Your's,

J. MELMOTH.

## LETTER XLIV.

From the Same to the Same.

**A**LL wrong, Sir James! This perverse young cynic told me he would advance no money to encourage me; adding—a gross insult!—that there were meritorious objects enough, without lavishing his property on the undeserving. I was struck dumb—No farther application there at present——Well, home I came, and ordered Mrs. Melmoth to petition Lord Belgrave for the loan of two or three thousand; and do you know the rebellious hussy had the assurance to flounce, and say she would not? “She ask a man for money! and especially “Lord Belgrave! not she indeed!”—It is the first time she ever contradicted me, and it made me stare, particularly on this account

account—I stormed and swore; but she was as firm as adamant, and as little abashed as an actress; and in high disdain flung up stairs; since which time we have never met, either at bed or board. I am generally out before dinner, and do not return till hours after she is retired to her room, and it would be very rude to disturb her repose: therefore she has the whole house to range in, and may feed and clothe her servants as she pleases; for no money shall she have from me, unless she will endeavour to get some: so I will be even with her for her ill-timed prudery. Let her good friends, Lord Mulcester and Lady Lucy, relieve her if they will.

But a more terrible disaster than this have I to bemoan:—Lady Anne has patched up the difference with her husband, and is gone back: however, she has given me one of her best ear-rings,  
and

and little Isaac is gone to Holland with it; and she had the address to persuade both aunt and husband that she had lost it in coming from the opera. It is advertised to-day; — (how we enjoy it in secret!) — if it is not found, the remaining one is to be sold, and Charles is to buy her a new pair. I expect it will fetch fifteen hundred; for her jewels are very fine ones. I shall make bold on future occasions to borrow a few more of her, since she has taught me the way. — I have something in my head — but hush! the scheme is but in embryo yet — Belgrave must help bear my expences — But I am interrupted —

A note from Lady Anne! — Jealous of me, by all that is good! — Sing *löö Pæan*, Melmoth! — What creature was it I was conversing with in one of the upper boxes last night? (It was Sir Charles Barham's Nancy.) Sent back a Pantheon ticket



ticket I had given her; begged she might never see me more; and “was my humble servant.” Now, how the devil shall I find out whether she goes or not; and, if she does, what her dress will be? I must dress up Bet Worley to personate one of the lace-carriers; she must make Mrs. Emmet a present of a piece, and fish it out of her that way.——I will conclude to-morrow, when I can tell the adventures of the night.



*In Continuation.*

WELL, I succeeded—Her Ladyship chose to figure away as Diana; a chaste character, and well adapted to the place: for sure at the Pantheon chaste Dian keeps her court. I went high with expectation; when, behold! who should be her escorts but her aunt and her Lord?  
and

and there was she, in spite of their presence, coquetting with Harry Hargrave. The devil take the sex! thought I: every soul of them follows the old trade of driving man out of Paradise. I was plaguily nettled, and fearful, lest Sir Harry (he is a handsome, clever fellow, you know) should take a fancy—to her jewels also. I had only a domino on at first; but I whipped out, and changed my dress to that of a huntsman, and was with her again in an instant. I offered her my service, and followed her with my horn the whole evening, and sung her a verse of one of Boyce's old ballads. There were several Diana's in the room; therefore this said verse soothed her vanity beyond expression—judge if it did not.

“ My Annie's known above the rest,  
 “ Tho' clad alike in green;  
 “ As is, amongst the huntress train,  
 “ The Goddess by her mien.”

She

She bridled and flirted after this. I do not think she knew me at first; but I took care she should before we parted, or my pains and flattery would have been ill-bestowed. I am resolved to have admittance this evening.

When I returned home, I was given to understand that my dainty wife was extremely ill.——Peace be with her! thought I; I am sure I will not disturb her. As I was dressing this morning, Lord Mulcester sent up his compliments. I was obliged to admit him, tho' I wished him at the devil: but it is not politic to quarrel with one in his situation.——Oh! such a lecture as I had from him on my conduct in general, and my behaviour to Mrs. Melmoth in particular! excusing himself on the friendship he bore my uncle and Harriet. How were all her virtues set forth, and ten times more than she or any woman ever had! “ He was

“ afraid (he said) I should break her  
 “ heart.” — “ Heart! Sir, (said I) I do  
 “ not believe she has a heart, or she could  
 “ not be so indifferent to me.” And  
 then in the most plaintive manner did I  
 complain of her disregard; that her in-  
 difference to me obliged me to be from  
 home oftener than I would be; that I was  
 careless of every thing, since I found I  
 could not possess her heart. “ You do  
 “ not know, my dear Lord Mulcester,  
 “ (said I) what cause I have to complain.  
 “ It is hard to be despised by one’s  
 “ wife.” “ Mrs. Melmoth (returned he)  
 “ is all nobly sincere and plain-hearted,  
 “ above art, above disguise: she cannot,  
 “ she will not despise the man to whom  
 “ she vowed duty and love at the altar,  
 “ except your conduct is premeditatedly  
 “ bad.” “ She loves me not, my Lord,”  
 (said I, withdrawing to the window, and  
 taking out my handkerchief.) You know  
 I am able to enter into any character, and  
 my

my muscles and features are entirely obedient to my will. In short, I persuaded him that Harriet was, at least in some degree, blameable.—What a comfortable thing is assurance! and how are those virtuous, wise heads taken in! A servant was dispatched with a compliment to Mrs. Melmoth, begging Lord Mulcester might be permitted to see her. “Do, “Sir, (said I) plead for me: she has “chosen separate apartments.” That, you will say, was a bold stroke: but I knew she would not complain; that would be a breach of duty; and the subject is so delicate, that his mediating Lordship cannot enter minutely into it. I doubt not but I shall bring good out of evil, as the good christians say. Her maid returned for answer, her mistress would be glad to see him. He is now with her, pleading my cause. Not knowing what to do with myself till his return, I took the pen and scribbled thus far.—As I



live, a message from his Lordship, desiring to see me in Mrs. Melmoth's dressing-room.——Adieu for the present.



WELL! Hazzeldine, the weighty conference is over. I came off with flying colours. Harriet and I are once more (upon my promise of reformation) on tolerable terms, thanks to his Lordship! What do you think I thank him for? He has lent a thousand pounds to pay some importunate trades-people. He kindly added, if he should find me act up to my professions, nothing should be wanting in his power to make me easy. What a charming thing it is to be good! —Soft souls and silly! —“ Do, my dear “ Melmoth,” (it is my dear Melmoth now) said his Lordship, “ let me have “ the pleasure of informing your uncle “ of an alteration for the better. You “ know

“ know yourself to be wrong: so it would  
 “ be impertinence to expostulate farther  
 “ on duties so well acknowledged as tem-  
 “ perance and sobriety.” Thus ended  
 the conversation. Finely catechised I have  
 been; but then I was well paid for it: for  
 do not think, my whining Harriet, you  
 shall keep the whole. (Observe, the note  
 was given into her hands.) Five hundred  
 must content the paltry fellows. I would  
 keep all; but it would spoil my future  
 prospects. And now I must prepare for  
 Lady Charles—No being good all at  
 once—that would be not to hold it. I  
 must laugh with Annie about this pious  
 scheme, and account to her why I cannot  
 pay my devoirs in public to her quite so  
 much as before. You must, you shall  
 be well enough to come to town; for  
 much are you wanted by

J. MELMOTH.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.